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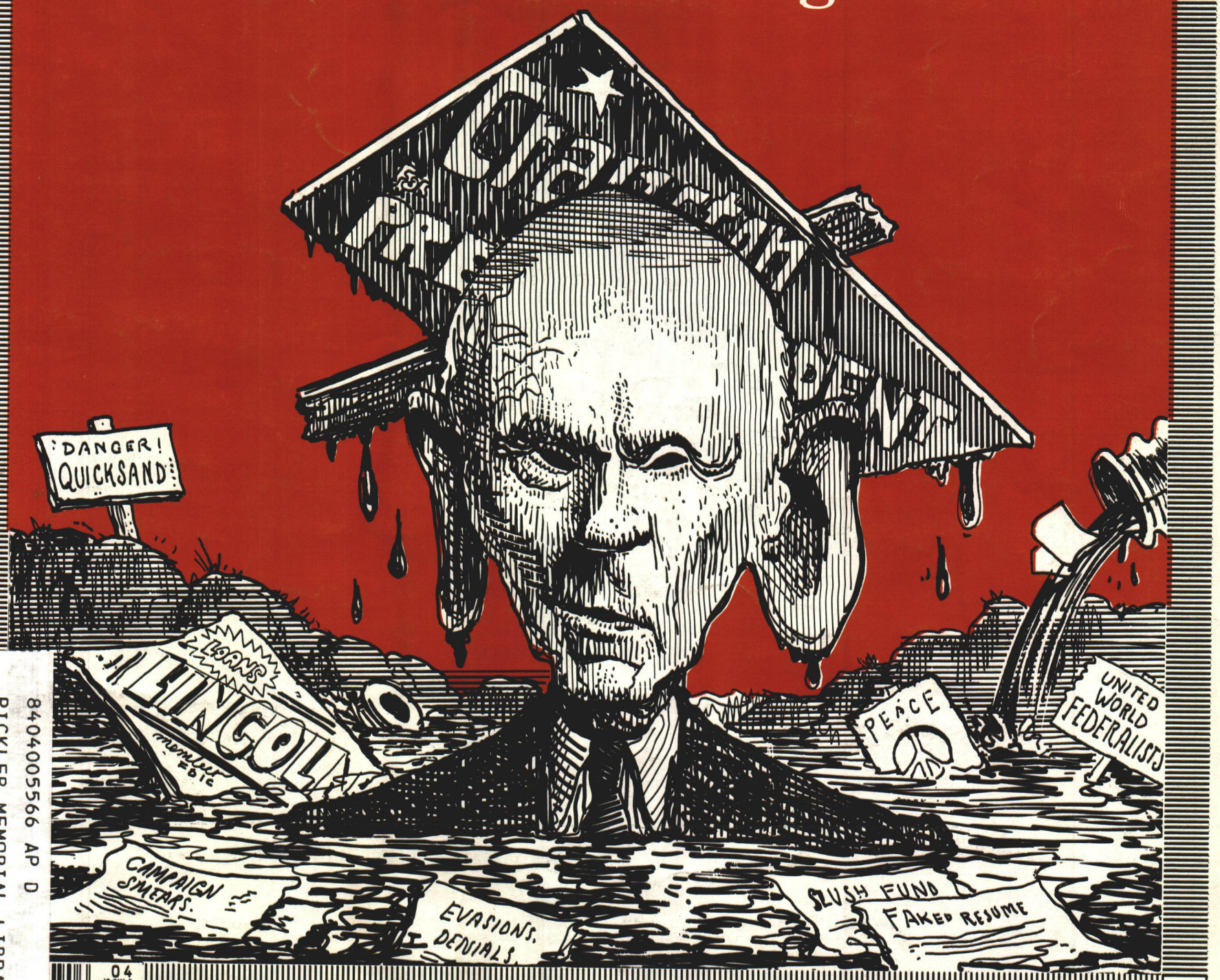

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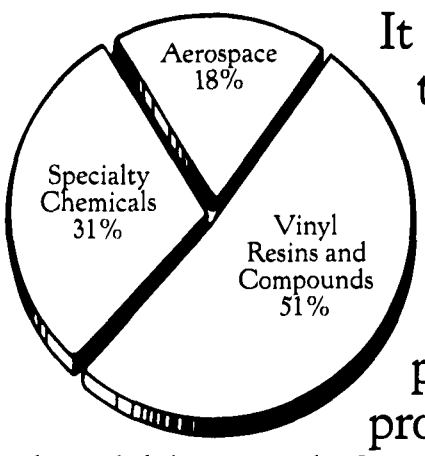

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The "West Bank" and Gaza

Should Israel withdraw from the territories?

The "intifada," the uprising of Arab Palestinians in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and Gaza has been going on since December of 1987. It has so far caused over 500 deaths. Many believe that the conflict would end if Israel were to withdraw from the territories, cede them to the Palestinian Arabs, and allow them to create a Palestinian state in them.

What are the facts?

■ The suggestion that Israel should give up the territories and that good things would flow from that is based on two assumptions, namely 1) that the demands of the Palestinian Arabs for independence from Israel are the source of the Arab conflict with Israel; and 2) that Israel's withdrawal from the territories and the creation of a Palestinian state in them would satisfy the aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs, that it would end the hostility of the Arab nations against Israel, and that it would restore peace to the area.

■ Unfortunately, both of these assumptions are not in accord with reality. The desire of the Arab nations to destroy Israel has been unrelenting from the day of the creation of Israel in 1948. It has given rise to five major wars, has caused tens of thousands of casualties, and untold destruction. The PLO, whose covenant—never changed and never amended—unequivocally calls for the destruction of Israel, was founded in 1964, long before Israel's administration in the territories. Thus, the almost single-minded obsession of the Arabs to destroy Israel, and not Israel's refusal to accede to the creation of a Palestinian state, is the cause of the never-ending conflict in the area.

■ It is difficult for the Western mind to understand the depth of passion on the part of the Arabs for the destruction of Israel. Among reasonable people, most conflicts might eventually be amenable to peaceful and rational solution. But in the Arab-Israel conflict, no such solution is in the cards for the foreseeable future. The reason is that 300 million Arabs consider the very existence of Israel an intolerable offense to their sense of history and destiny. It is not Israel's administration of the "West Bank" that is unacceptable to the Arabs; it is the very existence of Israel. There is no reason to believe that Israel's withdrawal and the establishment of a Palestinian state would appease the Arabs and induce them to make peace with Israel.

■ One can speculate as to what would be likely to happen if Israel—inadvisedly or ultimately bowing to pressure—were to yield the "West Bank" to Arab control. The murderous fratricidal passions that have been played out in Lebanon in the last fifteen years would be repeated in even more violent form. It is an improbable expectation that a state dominated by the murderous PLO would be the first Arab state ever to adhere to anything resembling democratic and human rights principles or that it would be a friend of the United States, and not an eager pawn of the Soviet Union.

■ The Lebanon slaughter would be shifted to the new Palestinian state, with Israel being a much readier target of its fury. A Palestinian Arab state on the "West Bank" would cut through Jerusalem, touch on the suburbs of Tel Aviv, and have a long border, nine to fifteen miles from the sea, with Israel's most thickly populated areas. Palestinian militias, armed, not with gasoline bombs and stones, but with helicopters, missiles, artillery and automatic weapons, would have Israeli pedestrians within rifle range, and Zion Square in Jerusalem and Ben Gurion airport within mortar range.

Few responsible elements in Israel's government and society wish to annex Gaza and the territories of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"). But also, hardly any responsible elements would consider relinquishing those territories for the creation of a Palestinian state. The Palestinian Arabs enjoy full civil rights and have been offered free elections and full autonomy by Israel, in line with Israel's commitments in the Camp David Accords. Moreover, Israel is ready and has always been ready to discuss the permanent status of the territories with responsible Palestinian representatives three years after the implementation of the autonomy. The situation of Israel and the territories is a bad one—no doubt about it. But the alternative to bad is not necessarily good. In this case, at least at the present time, the alternative would likely be a catastrophe, which, in its consequences, could even put the horrible situation of Lebanon in the shade. Real peace in the area will not come by Israel's yielding minimum strategic depth to its mortal enemies. It can only come about by the eventual rise of democratic governments in the "front-line" Arab states, governments that would accept Israel's existence and could learn to live in peaceful co-existence with it.

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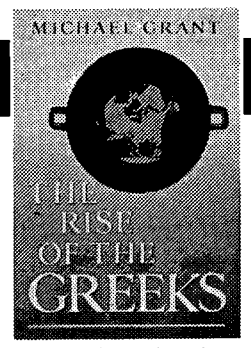

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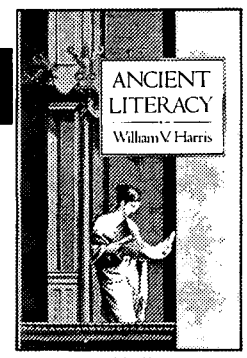

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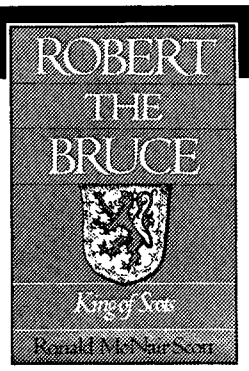

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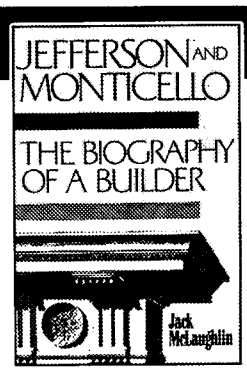

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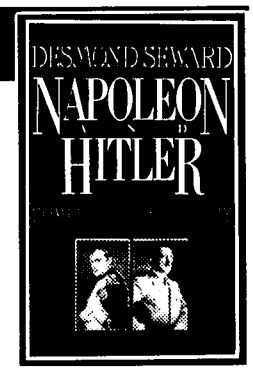

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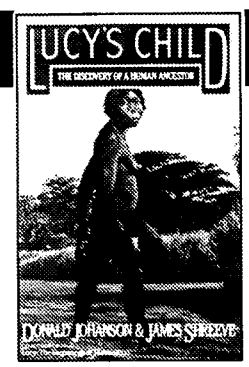

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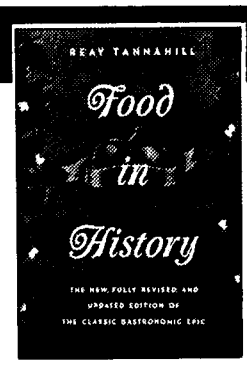

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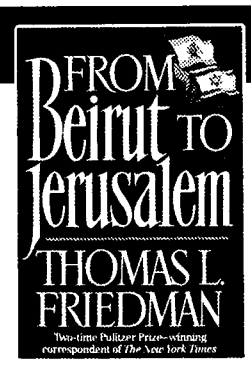

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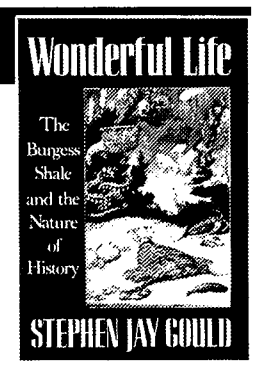

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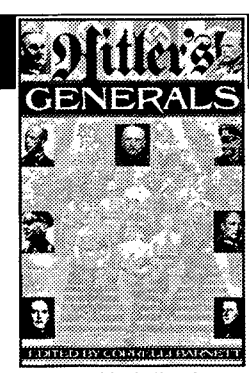

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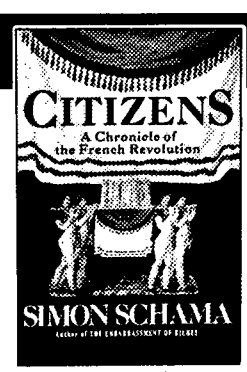

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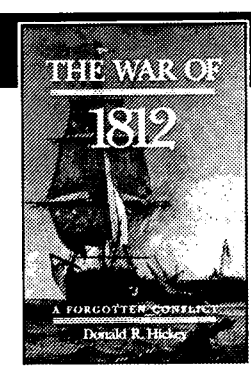

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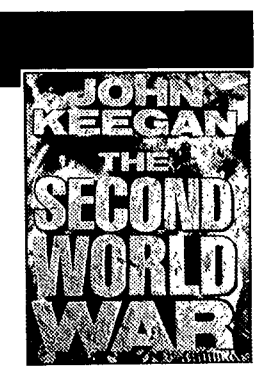

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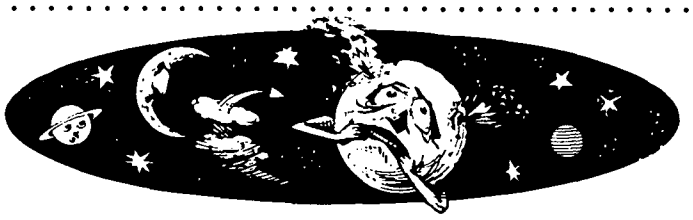
THE CONTINUING CRISIS



• February felt like spring through much of the United States, and in the Soviet Union it felt odd also. There, on February 7, the indigenous Communist party's Central Committee voted to repudiate the infamous Article 6 of the Soviet constitution, thus allowing other parties to compete for power, for instance, Whigs, Greens, Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, and perhaps even Washington Democrats—but then again perhaps not. Supposedly, President Mikhail Gorbachev wishes to bring prosperity to the Soviet Union, not Senator George Mitchell and the tax collectors. The Central Committee also recommended creating what the *New York Times* described as a "Western-style presidency and cabinet system." Is this a reference to the "Western-style" presidency of Mr. Ronald W. Reagan? Though our Liberal friends remain in the dark, it is as obvious as Mr. Gorbachev's forehead that the Hollywood cowboy presiding over American policy had a benign influence on his country and on other countries too, as was demonstrated in Nicaragua on February 25. On that day a decade of U.S. support for anti-Sandinista forces was rewarded by the electoral victory of Mrs. Violeta Chamorro, though once again the American press had anticipated an opposite result. Most pollsters had picked the Sandinistas to win, which made perfect sense to many in our press. After all, the Sandinistas are Communists, friends of the poor and uneducated, and look how popular Communists are elsewhere in the world, for instance, at the Harvard Law School. Yes, the Harvard Law School, that incomparable citadel of intellection where not so very long ago a common bag lady, Miss Billie Boggs, was invited to lecture the assembled geniuses on whatever it might be that was then stampeding through her crazed mind. Presently, she was back raving on the street. She should have been granted full tenure for her remarkable address. Her presence on the Harvard Law School faculty would be no more incongruous than the presence of a dozen or so of the profs now there, and doubtless she is better mannered—but I wander.

• In Libreville, Gabon, admirers of *l'ancienne cuisine* were stunned when Mr. Mba Ntem, 32, an accomplished high priest of a local animist sect, was sentenced to death for presiding over a cannibalism rite that included transforming the mortal remains of Mr. Andre Ondo Ngong into a lightly spiced casserole. The Gabonese government has in recent years come increasingly under the baleful influence of the World Health Organization and now takes an unreasonably harsh stand against cannibalism and the use of Nestle's infant formula by nursing mothers while booming somewhat peremptorily low-cholesterol diets and consumption of oat bran. This last unsavory recommendation is made notwithstanding recent scientific findings that the consumption of oat bran is a major source of the methane gas now contributing to the appalling "Greenhouse Effect." In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Sultan Abddul Aziz Shah has forgiven Chief Minister Muhammad Taib for marrying the sultan's skinny daughter, Miss Tengku Putri Zahariah, without permission. It was an unexpected *volte face* for the sultan, who was very angry when the couple eloped in 1987, taking all his Elvis Presley records.

• In response to Federal Judge Harold Greene's decision that former President

Ronald Reagan turn over his private diaries, the better for retired admiral John Poindexter to defend himself, the crafty ex-President agreed to do a videotaped testimony—an old Hollywood ploy that the actor has used to good effect throughout his political career. In preparation for her second round in court against charges of tax evasion, Mrs. Leona Helmsley hired Harvard Law School professor (!) Mr. Alan Dershowitz. And Mr. Dwaine Tinsley, the colorful creator of *Hustler* magazine's popular comic strip "Chester the Molester"—a strip that owes much to the pioneering work of Mr. Garry Trudeau—has been found guilty of (you guessed it) molesting a teenaged girl. Early in the month the State Department dismissed Mr. Felix Bloch, the diplomat suspected of making improper advances toward Soviet agents.

• In Washington, D.C., the Rev. George Stallings, who is black, has again incurred the hot water of the Roman Catholic Church, which as he describes it has become a kind of mystic accomplice of the Ku Klux Klan. Precisely which of the Rev. Stallings's ecclesiastical shimmies attracted the Church's ire is unclear. His support for abortion, divorce, birth control, and the ordination of women and married men all go against current Vatican dogma; and his plan to confer sainthood personally on the late Dr. Martin Luther King presents problems also. Yet whatever the tergiversation, the Church has excommunicated the Rev. Stallings, which is a churchly way of saying he can now go to hell. Scandal has befallen Mr. Derek Humphrey's Hemlock Society, a do-good organization dedicated to "assisted suicides" and "self-deliverance" for the dying. Fifteen years ago Mr. Humphrey prepared for his first wife a cup of coffee cut with a deadly concoction when it was discovered that she was terminally ill, thus inspiring many Americans to join his group. Now members of the Hemlock Society are wondering whether they have been hoodwinked into joining the ultimate no-fault divorce scheme. Mr. Humphrey is leaving his second wife who has elected to seek medical treatment for a potentially terminal disease rather than drink one of her husband's lethal coffees. He says she has become a bore, but she says he is leaving her because he feels she takes life too seriously.

• Condoms remain prominent in the news. The Smithsonian Institution reports that among the collectibles it took in last year were fourteen condom vending machines (containing, unused, 108 condoms), along with 1,272 dry-mounted specimens of lice. Windsor, Canada's exemplary safe sex campaign has caused a crisis in that city's sewage treatment system where, after a weekend of city-wide safe sex, thousands of condoms flushed by progressive copulators clog the sewage system. A late February snub of Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney by Philippine dictator Corazon Aquino may have been provoked by a lamentable snafu at the San Jose Public Library. There, a $10,000 banner welcoming visitors to the library had to be removed when it was discovered that the 30-foot-high greeting in twenty-seven languages botched its Philippine salutation by confusing the word "welcome" with the equally mellifluous Philippine word "circumcision." A published report from the National Academy of Sciences that the United States has fallen decades behind Europe in the development of contraceptives received the horse laugh when Mr. Adam Glickman, representing Custom Condoms of Somerville, Massachusetts, announced that his company will soon market a condom that glows in the dark. According to Mr. Glickman, the greenish light emitted from the condom is not strong enough to read a book or to sew by; but "is just bright enough to enable you to see other parts of your body." Apparently, Mr. Glickman's customers practice sex so safe that they use their condoms even when alone in the dark.

• Drexel Burnham Lambert passed away, as did Mr. Gabriel Estavao Monjane, 45, of Maputo, Mozambique, who at 8′ ¾″ was the world's tallest man. Also among the month's departed was Mr. Malcolm Forbes, who died in his sleep, and Mr. Victor Lasky, an early friend of this magazine, an early journalist against Communism, and, based on news from abroad, a much happier man than, say, the lifelong leftists at your local cow college. From China comes word that the tasteless practice of drowning baby girls is again rampant, owing in part to modern

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technology that allows the Chinese to identify the sex of a fetus months before birth. Animal rights activists went into high dudgeon after police laid the ambush and death of Mr. Hyram Kitchen, dean of the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine, to a plot by animal rights extremists who have vowed to murder the deans of veterinary colleges until all animal experiments end. Deans throughout the country have received death threats of uncommon grisliness even for American reformers.

• Dr. Albert Einstein's uxorious relationship with his first wife, Milvea, is being used as evidence in a nasty controversy among scholars, some of whom claim that the notoriously unkempt scientist actually stole ideas from her. Well, he certainly did not steal her ideas about personal hygiene and tidiness. Milvea was always as neat as a pin, and she used soap. *—RET*

CORRESPONDENCE

Congo Din

Congressional policy toward Zaire is a legitimate and important issue, worthy of informed public debate. However, David Brock's article ("The Prince Metternichs of Congress") in your February issue contains a number of inaccurate statements about my personal experiences and motives that amount to character assassination.

Contrary to Mr. Brock's reporting, I was not a Peace Corps Volunteer in Zaire during the 1960s. Nor did I publicly criticize the Mobutu government resulting in my getting thrown out of the country. And therefore I haven't "harbored a grudge ever since" contributing to a "zeal" to oppose Mobutu.

The truth of the matter is that I was engaged by the autonomous, Protestant-supported Université Libre du Congo in Kisangani as an associate professor of political science during 1969-1971. My salary was paid by the Congo (now Zaire) government. During an episode of peaceful student protest against internal university policies, which resulted in the expulsion of the entire sophomore class and the temporary arrest of several hundred students, I and other faculty perceived to be privately sympathetic to the students were forced to leave the university and go to the capital city of Kinshasa. There, both President Mobutu and his minister of the interior were helpful to me and my family. We subsequently left the country voluntarily but continued to be paid by the government. Well before this incident I had completed my doctoral dissertation at the University of Chicago on "American Foreign Policy Towards the Congo 1960-1964." That work, subsequently revised and published by Cornell University Press in 1974, contained a scholarly critique of the United States' association with the overthrow of the elected Lumumba government and the rise of the Mobutu regime.

Mr. Brock's article contains other inaccuracies on Zaire as well (e.g., his contention that Subcommittee on Africa Chairman Howard Wolpe refuses to talk to Mobutu. In fact, Wolpe has done so several times, most recently at a Foreign Affairs Committee coffee he hosted for Mobutu last summer).

But what is most shocking to me is that you and your publisher, Ronald E. Burr, would publish material defaming me without even requiring that the author interview me to obtain my reaction to these allegations.

—Steve Weissman
Staff Director, Subcommittee on Africa
Committee on Foreign Affairs
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

David Brock replies:

Several of Mr. Weissman's colleagues on the Hill were under the mistaken impression that he had spent his time in Zaire with the Peace Corps. While I stand corrected on that, I fail to see why saying Mr. Weissman was in the Peace Corps rather than at a university should constitute defamation. Further, I don't see how this changes the aptness of my observation that Mr. Weissman's unfortunate personal experiences in Zaire continue to shape his zealous views today. People who have seen Mr. Wolpe and Mr. Mobutu interact do not consider the hectoring remarks of Mr. Wolpe to be "speaking," thus the misleading statement that the two "do not speak." I should have said the two men do not speak civilly.

Greenspan and the Keating Five

Re: "The Man Who Bought Washington" by Terence P. Jeffrey (*TAS*, February 1990).

This article reminds me of those breathless exposés in the penny dreadfuls sold at every supermarket. With its octane rating hiked by a few "inside" disclosures fresh from the D.C. gossip circuit, the piece repackages material that has appeared in other media outlets. It is not apparent that much editing was done before the article went to print.

These objections are minor compared to the corruption implied in the statement, "So Keating now put Alan Greenspan . . . on the payroll." I've known Greenspan at least thirty years, and I have close mutual friends who know him well. The evidence is he's totally uncorruptible. The author offers no support for this implication. Nor does Terence Jeffrey mention, anent Greenspan's February 1985 letter, the possibility that it was based on information Greenspan did not know to be false. Too bad today's libel laws give no protection to public figures.

Southern people used to say that the fleshpots of the North seemed particularly damaging to ladies who departed with revered values and high morals. Something of the same process seems to have affected the *Spectator* since it traded Indiana for Washington, D.C.

—R. R. Richardson
New York, New York

Terence P. Jeffrey replies:

Charles Keating "put Alan Greenspan . . . on the payroll." Recently, I discussed the question with Keating, who confirmed that Lincoln S&L hired Greenspan in 1984 through Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton and Garrison, a New York law firm Keating had retained to lobby against Federal Home Loan Bank Board Chairman Ed Gray's direct-investment limitations. Keating says the law firm informed him they needed an economist to make their case and suggested Greenspan. In a report published in November, Greenspan himself admitted the fact to the *New York Times*. The *Times* paraphrased Greenspan as saying he did not remember "how much he was paid but that it was his usual rate."

It is also a fact that Greenspan was serving as an economic advisor to President Reagan at the same time Keating was paying him to make a case against Reagan Administration thrift regulations.

It is also a fact that in February 1985 Greenspan wrote a letter to the Federal Home Loan Bank-San Francisco claiming that Lincoln presented "no foreseeable risk" to the FSLIC and recommending that the thrift be exempted from the direct investment limitation. But Ed Gray foresaw a risk in the burgeoning direct-investment portfolios of Lincoln and similarly managed thrifts or he wouldn't have imposed the direct-investment limitation in the first place; and the FHLBB-SF foresaw the risk posed by Lincoln specifically, or they would have granted Keating the exemption Greenspan was requesting. History has proved Gray right and Greenspan wrong.

What I neglected to mention in the *TAS* story is that Senators Cranston, DeConcini, Glenn, and McCain all publicly cite Greenspan's arguments advocating that Lincoln be exempted from the direct-investment rule as justification for their own actions in helping Keating pursue such an exemption. As Cranston puts it in a brief submitted to the Senate ethics committee, "The problem, as conveyed to me at the time not only by Mr. Keating but also by Mr. Greenspan and Arthur Young and Co., was that federal examiners bore a substantial responsibility for creating the most destructive and irrational state of limbo for this institution . . . "

Where to Begin?

There is much that is unobjectionable in Michael Ledeen's piece "The Beginning of the Beginning" (*TAS*, February 1990). Presumably all of us who fancy ourselves conservatives, of whatever variety, are unhappy with the degree to which Communists retain bureaucratic power, particularly in security areas, within the Eastern bloc. Additionally, we would all like to see market-oriented policies pursued by the emerging non-Communist political leadership, and are concerned about the strength of social democracy and agrarian populism among some of the anti-Communists.

On the other hand, Mr. Ledeen begins by telling us that we are "at the beginning of the beginning," that change is real but tenuous; and he ends by telling us that we have a "pat hand," at least if correctly played. In between, he offers us analogies with Spain and Portugal, to suggest that we do little in Eastern Europe. If events sour, we lose little; if constructive change proceeds, we have little to fear, for the Eastern Europeans can solve their own problems; and, in any case, if economic crisis precipitated change in the first place, why not keep the pressure on? Reasonable, yes; satisfactory, no.

First, especially after Rumania, it is difficult to believe that we are at "the beginning of the beginning." These countries are ready to explode if their political aspirations are unsatisfied, and in the chaos of Rumania, the army threw in its lot with the rebellion, and the internal security apparatus was slaughtered. (I am unhappy with the

(continued on page 48)

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EDITORIALS

JUNK BONDS INTO SCRAP

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Washington, D.C.

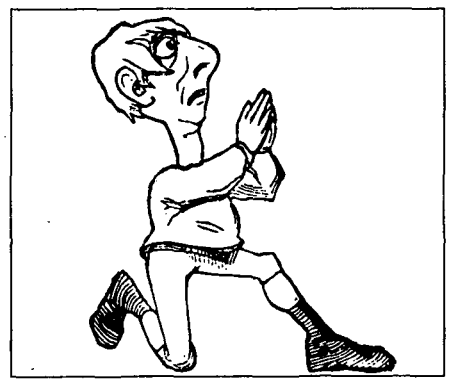
The current *concerto grosso* of sad news being played by the pundits of this unhappy town is that nowadays all the history is being made elsewhere. Washington is peripheral to the historic events shaking the world. The action is elsewhere, in Eastern Europe, on Wall Street, alas and boo hoo.

Washington is a pleasant Southern town with no particular indigenous industry aside from government, which in prosperous and peaceful times is bland stuff. The pundits and politicos who live here have been accustomed to the sound and fury of great events and do not like it that they are not center stage while democracy and capitalism revive the feudal states now so starkly revealed by the collapse of the Iron Curtain. Nor are they happy that the demise of Drexel Burnham Lambert and the junk-bond bubble has given them little opportunity to ham it up.

Well, it is not as though they were not told. A problem in present-day Washington is that the city is filled with people striking the heroic stance while on the take. They have a vested interest in the present moment. They have all been bought off in one way or another, and they do not want to take any of the heroic actions their blood-curdling boasts might imply. What would they have the United States do in Eastern Europe, unleash General George Patton? The breakup of the Communist empire is in large part the consequence of forty years of steadfast U.S. policy.

And what about the collapse of the junk-bond market and of Drexel Burnham Lambert? For two years one of the masters of 1980s finance, Theodore J. Forstmann, has been loyally showing up at congressional hearings to alert the Congress that the junk bond has been transformed from a benign instrument of economic growth into a narcotic fit only for addicts. James Grant, founder and editor of *Grant's Interest Rate Observer*, has for an even longer time warned that giant corporations were changing hands for no sound economic reason other than the short-term profiteering of greedy deal-makers. In a frenzy to make deals lucrative for lawyers and investment bankers, corporations were being burdened with onerous debt that at the first sign of economic downturn would flatten them.

The response to these men was not very hospitable in Washington, and it was downright hostile in New York. Incidentally, the disparagement of them came from both conservatives and liberals. No one wanted to be blamed when the boom collapsed. Now here in Washington the town's wizards will soon be stepping forward with a cure to ensure that no such boom will ever take place again. Washington will move



to enchain the bond markets in regulations. But was not the S&L business secured by regulations? It was indeed, and when the time was ripe greedy operators conspired with politicians to thwart the regulations, buy off venal regulators, and render conscientious regulators impotent.

Washington may be able to get back in the action by regulating the bond market further, but by doing so it will not improve the market or rid it of speculators. Actually, government had a hand in creating the speculative boom and bust. Companies burdened with junk-bond debt have been allowed to deduct interest payments on certain particularly junky junk bonds, though they never make interest payments in cash. Had government ended that policy the present bankruptcies might not be taking place.

There is a poetic touch to the present junk-bond collapse. A couple of years ago corporate takeover artists of prudent disposition recognized that junk bonds had inflated corporate prices and backed off. Sir Jimmy Goldsmith returned to Europe where prices seemed more reasonable. Forstmann, though abounding with cash, sat on the sidelines and waited for market discipline to assert itself. Both were chided for their prudence. Well, on the day that newspapers reported Drexel Burnham Lambert's bankruptcy, they also reported that Forstmann had left the sidelines and bought Gulfstream for some $175 million less than earlier rumors suggested, and without junk bonds. Now we read that three weeks before putting its 5,300 employees out of work Drexel Burnham Lambert awarded $350 million in bonuses to top executives. That is a new record in brazenness. □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*

ROONEY TUNES

There was a day when the wits and sages of television were cosmopolitan gadflies such as John Kenneth Galbraith, William F. Buckley, Jr., and my good friend Gore Vidal. Now the Sardonic Thought Dept. is under the direction of the likes of Andy Rooney —though do not look for Rooney on CBS for the next three months. In an industry where freedom of thought and of expression are reverenced, Mr. Rooney has been suspended for a lapse into free expression. The First Amendment in American media is a protection for flippancies and affronts against the usual easy targets, the presidency, the clergy, the local tycoon, apple pie. It is no protection for candor.

I hasten to say that Andy Rooney's commentary is not to my liking, as lime slacks worn with a blue blazer are not to my liking or men licking lollipops in public. The heavily affected buffoonery of his persona is more appropriate to Saturday morning children's programming than to adult commentary. I can easily see his scrooched up face coming on the screen at the end of an hour of Saturday morning cartoons and commercials for repulsive breakfast foods as he intones one of his oh-what-a-fuzzy-wuzzy-am-I soliloquies. Doubtless the children would be improved by one of his wry and goofy discourses, say on the funny varieties of garbage disposal adopted by the different peoples of the world, how to react when menopause afflicts one's tabby cat, or an amusing vegetable—broccoli is always a favorite with this sort of wit.

Actually, when CBS admits Rooney back from exile he probably will desist from all non-vegetable jokes and may even stay clear of vegetable jokes. There are some very sensitive vegetarians out there, who can always call on their cousins, the fruitarians, for support in a protest against CBS and the diabolical Andy Rooney. As for such topics as garbage collection in foreign lands and menopause, surely he will stay clear of these. The list of taboo subjects in America is growing even as the number of irked minorities grows.

What has gotten Rooney into trouble is that he spoke his mind about anal intercourse among homosexuals, relating it to AIDS. He opposes this act of sexual congress. In fact he has actually said on a CBS special that "many of the ills which kill us are self-induced. Too much alcohol, too much food, drugs, homosexual unions, cigarettes. They're all known to lead quite often to premature death." Homosexuals complained. Doubtless as the Republic's roll call of aggrieved groups grows our indignant alcoholics will be able to silence commentators as will drug addicts, and gluttons—though apparently not cigarette smokers. In modern liberal America cigarette smokers have no rights.

Responding to the complaints of militant homosexuals, Rooney granted an interview to a reporter from a homo-

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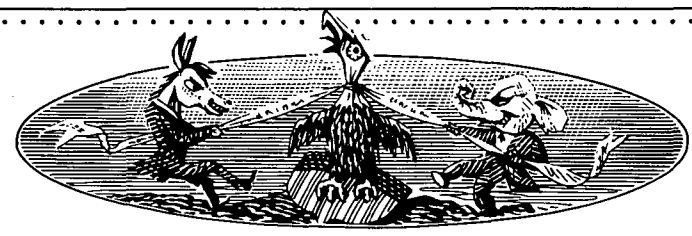
sexual magazine (that is to say a magazine written for homosexuals, not a magazine that loves other magazines), one Chris Bull, which is an ideal name for a journalist, don't you think? At any rate Bull claims that Rooney said, "Blacks have watered down their genes because the less intelligent ones are the ones that have the most children. They drop out of school early, do drugs and get pregnant."

That has landed Rooney in hot water with black leaders as well as homosexuals, and it has done him no good to deny that he referred to blacks. Nor is he helped by the fact that we have only Bull's testimony that Rooney spoke of blacks. There is no other evidence that Rooney mentioned race and the *New York Post* has published similar remarks by Rooney about school dropouts that carefully avoid the matter of race, but this will do Rooney no good either. His error has been to speak candidly.

If you have ever wondered why television commentary is so bland and childish, ponder the fate of Mr. Rooney. The president of CBS News, in announcing Rooney's three-month trip to Siberia, asseverated that "I have made it clear that CBS News cannot tolerate such remarks or anything that approximates such comments, since they in no way reflect the views of this organization." Now, as we do not really know what Rooney said—unless you take Bull as infallible—and thus cannot know what remarks might "approximate" Rooney's remarks, my guess is that commentary—at least on CBS—is going to become even more inane.

What is more, CBS's problems have just begun. If the professionally indignant can silence Rooney for things he might not have said, you can be sure that others with a bone to pick are going to attempt the same coercion. A better policy is to stand by the First Amendment. If broadcasters do not, their problems with free speech will get worse. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



HOMESTEADING ON THE LIBERAL PLANTATION

by Tom Bethell

The story so far (Capitol Ideas, *TAS*, February 1990): About eighteen months ago, the keys of ownership to the 464-unit Kenilworth-Parkside public housing project in Washington, D.C. were transferred to a tenant management corporation, presided over by Kimi Gray. The project is now being renovated with HUD funds (possibly $35 million). Families have been moved out to accommodate the reconstruction; they will be permitted to buy their units when they return. But resale restrictions written into the law by liberal congressmen may prevent buyers from realizing the enhanced value of these renovated units. Tenants who buy units will have to sell them back either to the co-op or the public housing authority.

The danger is that tenants will lack an incentive to buy units. To remain in tenant-managed public housing, occupants will either have to stay poor (to remain eligible for subsidy), or buy units with resale restrictions. In either event, they will be encouraged to stay on at Kenilworth-Parkside, which will receive from HUD a "project-based" block of Section 8 housing vouchers, covering all rental and utility costs for seven years. "Project-based" means that these vouchers will not be "portable." Tenants who move away from Kenilworth-Parkside will move to the bottom of the voucher waiting list in any new jurisdiction.

Thus Kimi Gray will have low-income tenants with the right to manage their own project and permission to buy units within it; but subsidies and resale restrictions might keep them wards of the state. But according to Stuart Butler, the Heritage Foundation's director of domestic policy studies, it is the changeover from management by the local housing authority to tenant management that will make all the difference.

• • •

Another problem written into the 1987 Housing Act, and not generally understood by conservatives, is that for each unit of public housing sold to a resident management corporation, a replacement unit must be provided, whether by "production, acquisition, or rehabilitation of vacant public housing units." According to David K. Groo, the program manager for Robert Woodson's National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, this "one-for-one" replacement provision will "double the number of units" available to low-income families under the HUD umbrella (because the old units will remain subject to low-income eligibility rules).

The congressman who today remains closely involved with these issues is Dick Armey, Republican of Texas, first elected to Congress in 1984, and responsible for putting together the successful military base-closing measure last year. Meanwhile, he is co-sponsoring, with Rep. Walter Fauntroy of D.C., the (1990) Urban Homestead Act, the principal provision of which will circumvent the problem of one-for-one replacement of public housing units by permitting the use of housing vouchers to meet the replacement requirement. In other words, if a 500-unit public housing project is sold to its tenants, the local housing authority would not have to build or renovate 500 more units, but would be permitted to issue 500 new vouchers, which can then be used by low-income people to defray the cost of housing in the private sector.

According to a minority staffer on the House Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development, the congressman most adamantly opposed to this measure is Henry Gonzalez of Texas, the chairman of the subcommittee, who believes that each unit sold must be replaced by a "hard" unit. Rep. Fauntroy, although a co-sponsor, was not enthusiastic about voucher replacement when I asked him. "That is something that Mr. Armey wanted," he said. "I am not sure it can stand up to the scrutiny of the committee." He told me two or three times of his "firm conviction that the private sector cannot and will not build housing for low- and moderate-income people." But he was also troubled because "what was envisioned as a way station [i.e., public housing] became permanent."

According to Armey, the key congressmen to resist tenant ownership when the relevant sections of the 1987 law were debated in the House were Barney Frank (D-Mass.), Bruce Morrison (D-Conn.), and Bruce Vento (D-Minn.). On the resale restrictions, he recalled, Frank was "the most articulate person on the floor feigning compassion on the issue." And Bruce Vento, he said, "actually argued that these people don't have the ability to tend to their own affairs." Armey quoted Vento to this effect before a group of public housing residents. "They were ready to take him out and hang him," Armey said. "Vento has never forgiven me for that."

Armey mentioned another problem that I was not aware of—a provision put into the law by Rep. Morrison that would tie the resident management association to the existing union contracts of the public housing authority. Tenant management, said Armey, is predicated on the right of poor people "to put their own sweat equity into their own homes, just as you and I do. Most of us could not afford to own our homes if we couldn't go in and fix our own leaky faucets or replace light switches." In the private sector, he said, owners "become part electrician, part plumber, part painter." But an attempt to remove the Morrison provision was defeated in the House. Armey said he thought the provision "was designed to keep the unions involved in public housing."

Bruce Morrison himself defended the provision on the floor with the argument that its language "was carefully chosen so as not to impose any new rights or restrictions on the tenants, but to preserve the rights that already exist for the [union] employees." Notice the phrase, "so as not to impose any new rights . . . on the tenants." More accurately, "so as not to *give* them any new rights." →

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

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Jim Kolbe (R-Ariz.) replied: "These restrictions are going to prohibit resident management corporations from hiring low-income, hardcore unemployed inner-city residents from performing onsite maintenance in their own projects." He added that this was "anti-poor" and "anti-minority."

Bruce Vento then said: "We have plumbing problems. We have electrical problems. We have carpentry problems that need to be addressed. Are the tenants that are living in assisted housing, are they the skilled mechanics that can take on these tasks of doing the electrical rewiring of a multicomplex housing unit? Are they the glaziers that will hang out there and put a piece of glass into a window? I think on its face it is obvious that they cannot do that." (And so they should not be permitted to try. Thus speaks the voice of contemporary liberalism.) Vento went on to say that "you have to give the public housing authorities the ability to be responsible for the dollars that are spent. It is just that simple."

When it came time for the vote, Rep. Ron Dellums (D-Calif.) was at first "confused," according to one account. A deputation of public housing residents outside on the House steps urged him to vote against Morrison. Then he went through the door and the union lobbyists beset him. Along with almost the entire Black Caucus (including Conyers, Crockett, Dixon, Dymally, Savage, and Stokes), Dellums voted with the unions.

Black (and liberal) congressmen will probably continue to side with the money (the unions) rather than the votes (the project residents) because, for the time being, they remain confident that people in housing projects won't vote Republican. But they are beginning to get nervous. A contingent of public-housing residents did turn out to vote against Morrison in 1988, I was told. But the liberals have a lot invested in herding poor (overwhelmingly black) people together into what Kimi Gray has called the new plantations, and keeping them there at taxpayers' expense. Among other things, bunching them together makes it easier to truck them to the polls on election day. But the possibility that they may start voting Republican in the secrecy of the voting booth explains why a number of liberal congressmen now feel that they have to pay lip-service to tenant management (while fighting off the voucher system that threatens to break up the public housing plantations).

One afternoon I drove out to Kenilworth-Parkside with Marilyn Melkonian, who was deputy assistant secretary for housing in the Carter Administration, and is now president of a company called Telesis, which (she told me) "combines public and private investment to lower the cost of housing for ordinary people." Marilyn is a liberal's liberal, believing that there are very few "basic needs" (and certainly not housing) that the private market can meet "one hundred percent" without government subsidy. Clothing seemed to be one of the few; she sees no sign of a "nakedness problem." Currently, housing subsidies consume only about one percent ($12 billion) of the federal budget (up from $5.7 billion in 1980). She believes this should be tripled. She told me that she had not seen Kimi Gray for some time, implying that they didn't entirely see eye to eye on housing.

We bumped and rolled our way across D.C.'s pot-holed, Third World streets in Marilyn's snazzy Jeep, a 10-mile safari from her Georgetown office out to Parkside, which is east of the Anacostia River. Here Telesis would be developing 250 single family homes, with capital loans provided directly by the federal and D.C. governments. Eligible buyers will be permitted to earn no more than 80 percent of the area's average income. (The good news is that the purchasers will become true

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property owners, with clear title and no resale restrictions.)

We drove by Paradise Manor, a bleak, 670-unit "garden apartment" complex built in the late 1960s with a low-interest federal government loan. Some of the occupants receive housing subsidies from HUD. This is a totally black section of the city, incidentally. Marilyn told me that until 1988 the area was drug-infested and dangerous, but that within the last eighteen months "black Muslims" had done a remarkable job of driving off the drug dealers. The Muslims would show up from the nearby Washington Mosque #4, selling copies of their newspaper, *Final Call*, and the drug dealers would "shrink away," Marilyn said. "If it hadn't been for the Muslims, we would be nowhere."

The Kenilworth-Parkside project was only a few hundred yards away. We drove slowly past the low-rise buildings of the project, which covers several blocks. Almost all the buildings were boarded up, and although construction crews were at work on a few buildings, most of the structures were receiving no attention at all. Marilyn reckoned it would be a year, perhaps eighteen months, before the renovation could possibly be completed. The area seemed deserted, although one small section of the project was still inhabited. We made our way down a footpath, and Marilyn went ahead into the Kenilworth-Parkside office.

"Hi, Kimi," I heard her say as she stood in the door. "I've brought a friend of mine. But we disagree about everything."

Kimi was stationed massively behind her desk, with a plate of carry-out chicken in front of her. Although presumably expecting no visitors she was all dressed up in a smart royal blue dress with big earrings and masses of costume jewelry. A young black man named Mike hovered uneasily in the background. Her wish, one sensed, was his command. I had repeatedly tried to reach Kimi, to no avail. She was always out and about, in and out, running around, or en route to Nashville.

"Two things I don't like," she said. "A ringing phone and a nosy reporter." Those were not her first words, but her most memorable. I guessed she had been behind her desk all along.

"But you have always received a good press, Kimi."

"That's because I don't talk to nosy reporters."

She banished my note-pad, and I didn't dare touch the tape recorder in my pocket.

I asked her how she felt about Dick Armey's voucher provision. When she contrived to talk about it without saying whether she supported it or not, my impression of her changed completely. I realized she was walking deftly across a political tightrope. If she told a reporter she supported the idea, she would be seen as siding with "right-wing Republicans." But if she opposed it, she could kill the idea. The same would be true of anything she might say on resale restrictions.

"This is a liberal city," she told me meaningfully. "This is a liberal area." She repeated this a couple of times. She waved aside my suggestion that there were problems of resale restrictions or union strangleholds or one-for-one replacements. "You know why this is going to work?" she said. "It's not because somebody else conceived of it. It's because we conceived of it. And I'm going to be here when it's carried out."

My guess is that first she has to get the property renovated, the sale completed, the tenants returned. Then, when she has her troops lined up (and the same is true in other projects across the land) she will be in a stronger position to go back to Congress and demand that the law be quietly changed, permitting them to run their own plantation without further interference. □

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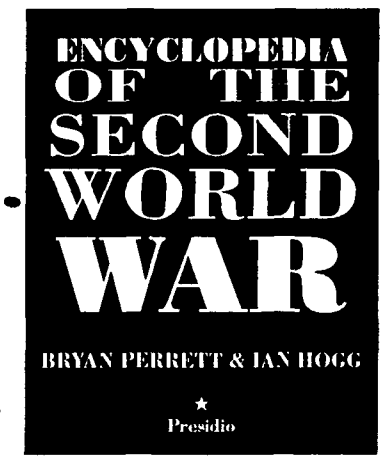

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Fred Barnes

BUSH'S BIG GOVERNMENT CONSERVATIVES

Don't confuse them with Bigger Government Liberals. They're simply men who've stared political reality in the face and decided to use government for conservative ends.

In 1985, William Bennett's first year as secretary of education, he loyally defended all of President Reagan's proposed budget cuts, including a sharp reduction in federal spending on education. To his surprise, Bennett found himself almost alone among Cabinet members in publicly talking up the cuts. Still, he went along the next two years with efforts to hold spending at the Department of Education to roughly $15 billion annually. The efforts failed badly, as Congress added another $5 billion each year. In 1988, Bennett rebelled. At his instigation, the federal education budget sent to Congress by Reagan was boosted to $21 billion. "There was no political gain in ruthless cutting," explained a Bennett aide. "You could be a reformer but not a cutter."

Bennett's metamorphosis, largely unnoticed at the time, was both important and prophetic. He had entered the Cabinet as a confirmed Reaganite. (Bennett believed, correctly, that he was more on Reagan's ideological wavelength than most Cabinet members.) He emerged as the forerunner of a new breed, the big government conservative, that is now flourishing in the Bush Administration. Three of the four leading conservatives under Bush—Drug Czar Bennett, Vice President Dan Quayle, and Jack Kemp, the secretary of housing and urban development—qualify. The fourth, John Sununu, the White House chief of staff, probably does also (though it's hard to know for certain, since he's more a policy broker than an advocate).

The contrast with the Reagan Administration couldn't be more striking. The top conservatives under Reagan, particularly in his first term, were passionate opponents of federal programs, except Pentagon ones. They believed, as Reagan stated in his inaugural address, that government is the problem, not the solution. Budget director David Stockman favored "minimalist" government, the least amount possible. Edwin Meese, a White House counselor before he became attorney general, didn't go quite that far, but he was bent on reducing the size of government. So was Martin Anderson, Reagan's chief domestic policy adviser and a libertarian. So was James Miller, first chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, then budget director. To them, no domestic program was sacrosanct, not even Social Security. And Stockman was deeply skeptical of a lot of military spending, too.

Not one conservative of the Reaganite, small government ilk has a top-tier job in the Bush Administration. But big government conservatives are thriving. Four attitudes make them a distinct group. First, they're realistic. They've concluded there's a good reason why Reagan failed, in eight years, to pare the size of the federal government. People, it turns out, like big government, not bigger, but roughly as big and expensive as it is now. In trimming programs and curbing spending, Reagan got as much as anyone could. Trying to cut more won't succeed, and it's politically risky. Bennett is explicit on this point. "If you couldn't get rid of substantial portions of government with the conservative revolution led by Ronald Reagan, you are probably not going to do it with anybody," he told Adam Meyerson of *Policy Review* in 1988.

Kemp asserted the same on the narrower issue of whether to cut Social Security benefits or dismantle the entire system. (Today he favors cutting the payroll tax.) "Why tilt at windmills on an issue that has been decisively resolved by the American public for fifty years?" he wrote two years ago to Ed Crane, president of the libertarian Cato Institute. "Indeed, why continually dredge up an issue that really has little to do with the survival and extension of democratic capitalism and has caused more conservatives to lose elections than any other single issue?"

Second, big government conservatives are programmatic. They like to be in favor of things because that puts them on the political offensive. "The one thing that I have learned in government is that politics is like a football game in which two things count, time and possession," Bennett said. "You are either on offense or you are on defense. You are never in between. There is never a time-out. You either have the ball and are moving it against them, or they are moving against you." A program of spending cuts has political appeal on occasion—one was 1981 when deep Reagan-Stockman cuts passed Congress—but such times are few and far between. "Just being a minimalist is not being consistent with a more activist, programmatic conservative model," said Kemp. He's never been accused of being a minimalist.

Third, Bennett, Kemp, and Quayle view government far more benignly than the Reagan crowd did. "I would urge conservatives to view the existence of government programs as an opportunity to make things better," declared Bennett. Kemp goes further. He said Jefferson was right about the least government being the best. "It's also true that government is best that does the most for people," he added. At HUD, Kemp has been careful to hire top officials who share his view. Anna Kondratas, who runs homeless and

Fred Barnes is a senior editor of the New Republic.

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community grant programs, was initially spotted by Kemp when she appeared on C-SPAN. What caught his attention was that she seemed "activist" and "compassionate" and "market-oriented," all the things he likes in a conservative.

Quayle has been less philosophical than Bennett or Kemp in spelling out his brand of conservatism. But he's demonstrated his positive view of government by his persistent support for the Job Training Partnership Act, which gives subsidies to businesses to train disadvantaged workers. As a senator, Quayle joined with Teddy Kennedy to pass the $2.4 billion measure in 1982 over the objections of the Reagan White House. The program was subjected to a new barrage of criticism from conservatives after Quayle was picked as Bush's running mate. Persuasive as the attacks on the program's effectiveness were, Quayle didn't flinch. On the contrary, he showed up in May 1989 at a Senate hearing to praise the program and swap compliments with Kennedy for having proposed it.

Fourth, big government conservatives aggressively seek to broaden the scope and maximize the funding of their programs. Bennett got into a bitter dispute with the White House over funding in 1991 for the drug program. He zinged Sununu and Budget Director Richard Darman in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*. Then, alone among Bush Administration officials, he refused to compromise with Darman, insisting on taking his case to Bush. The President split the difference between Bennett and Darman. In the process, Bennett may have alienated Darman. But at least there's no question about his commitment to the federal government's role in curbing drug trafficking.

Kemp was just as zealous—but not as reckless—as Bennett. He began his drive to create and fund a new conservative anti-poverty program by privately lobbying Darman, Sununu, Quayle, and others at the White House. This way, he arranged an early session with Bush, who signed off on HOPE (Home Ownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere). Plans were set for Bush to announce the new program in Newark. But that was scrapped when the scandal from Samuel Pierce's HUD days engulfed the agency. Kemp didn't give up, and Bush wound up announcing the program in Atlanta in November. In the 1991 budget, Kemp got only a fraction of the additional funds he'd sought, but $2.2 billion over three years will get the program off the ground.

Quayle's pet project is the space program. Bush established a National Space Council and made Quayle the chairman. The vice president takes the job seriously. His first success came in spring 1989 when he worked out an arrangement with Defense Secretary Richard Cheney to save the planned national aerospace plane, the one that's supposed to fly from New York to Tokyo in two hours. Cheney had wanted to scrap it. Quayle has also taken to prodding the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. "Kicking NASA in the butt is necessary, they're so bad," says a Quayle adviser. And he lobbies the President. Bush's announcement on July 20 that American astronauts would return to the moon was regarded as a triumph for Quayle. With Quayle's support, the space program is backing away from privatization, which was pursued vigorously under Reagan. "It was terrific instincts," said Mark Albrecht, executive director of the Space Council. "It was bad market assessment." American companies aren't equipped to compete against other countries in space, Albrecht said. Only the government can do that. Given the success of earlier government-run space missions, I'm willing to buy the Albrecht case.

That touches on another trait of big government conservatives: they're given to boasting about how much money they get for their programs. "Despite the well-known budget constraints, and despite cuts by Congress in our proposal, our 1990 civil space budget is nearly 12 percent larger than 1989's," Quayle said in a speech last January. It must have pained Quayle to know that Bush's space budget would be hiked another 24 percent for 1991, and not to be able to announce it. The new budget hadn't been released yet. When I inquired at Quayle's office, his aides sent me the "space and biotechnology" section from the Bush budget. It was opened to the page headlined, "A 47 Percent Increase For Exploration Activities Will Support The Moon/Mars Initiative." They also included another page from the budget with a paragraph noting the 24 percent increase highlighted. "This is the largest increase for any major agency of the government," it said.

Bennett disputes that. At the National Press Club in January, he said drug war spending had soared 69 percent. "We believe that if you look at major programs in the budget, there may not be any with a 69 percent increase since the President took office," he said. "We think we may have received the largest increase of any major program since his inauguration." In his appearance at the Press Club last November, Kemp couldn't match Bennett's claim. Still, he noted Bush "has proposed a $2.1 billion housing grant program that will increase low-income homeownership." The homeless "will receive more than $1.4 billion not only for shelter, but for the professional treatment they need to restore their chances to live a normal and dignified life."

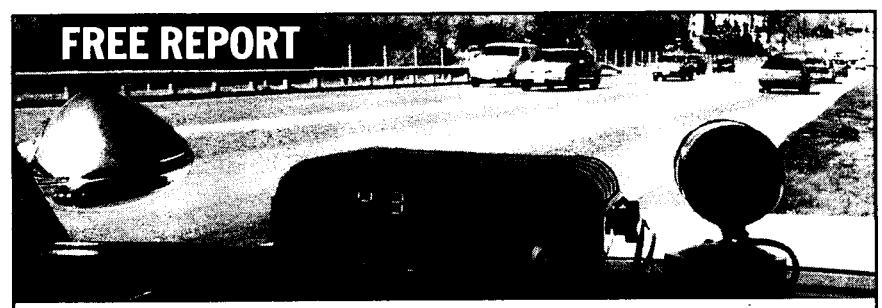
Big government conservatives are programmatic. They like to be in favor of things because that puts them on the political offensive.

Because his anti-poverty ideas have a liberal ring, Kemp has more explaining to do to conservatives than Bennett and Quayle. Bennett's war on drugs consists chiefly of stepped-up law enforcement, which conservatives always back, and Quayle's space program has patriotic appeal and an important military dimension, which also won't hurt with conservatives. Kemp bristled last fall when the *Wall Street Journal* urged that HUD be eliminated, its funding used instead in the battle against drugs. HUD, he said, "has too much of a role to play in helping low and moderate income people get on the ladder of opportunity. . . . If laissez-faire economics had prevailed in America from 1776 to 1976, maybe we wouldn't need HUD. But it didn't. Now we need HUD to dismantle disincentives and advance the correct incentives."

Vouchers aren't Kemp's only anti-poverty tool. He doesn't want to be Secretary of Vouchers, as palatable as that idea is to conservatives. Kemp argues that poor people need more than a chance. They need help—child care, job counseling, training, education—that only government can offer before they can pull themselves up by their bootstraps. Providing this is proper in a conservative war on poverty, according to Kemp, so long as there's a "two-way proposition." Government help must "be matched by the commitment of recipients to take actions to become self-sufficient."

Kemp won't concede he's a big government conservative. "I'm a limited government conservative," he said. Okay. I don't blame him for rejecting the big government label. It sounds liberal, and Kemp isn't. But it makes the point. Kemp is bold enough to use liberal means—activist government—for conservative ends. He's a conservative who's not only accepted but is exploiting big government. That makes him a big government conservative in my book. Worse things could be said.

If Kemp, Bennett, and Quayle succeed, they're bound to start a trend. Then the next wave of conservatives in the Cabinet will be eager to emulate them. At least I hope so. Since we're going to have big government anyway, it makes sense to have conservative big government. It's not an oxymoron. □



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ALAN CRANSTON'S BIG LIES

They started long before the senator's involvement in the Keating scandal and perhaps explain why the California Democrat is not going down gracefully.

On February 2, 1983, Sen. Alan Cranston, Democrat from California, in announcing his candidacy for the presidency, immediately fell back on an old habit of embellishing his personal history. He told reporters, "I covered Hitler and Mussolini in the dark days of conquest and appeasement that preceded the Second World War. . . . The war came. I declined deferment and enlisted in the Army." Three years later, the "biographical sketch" distributed by his press office provided more information on how he "covered" Hitler and Mussolini. It seems he had "joined the staff" of the old International News Service (INS) and "served as a foreign correspondent in England, Germany, Italy, and Ethiopia from 1936-38."

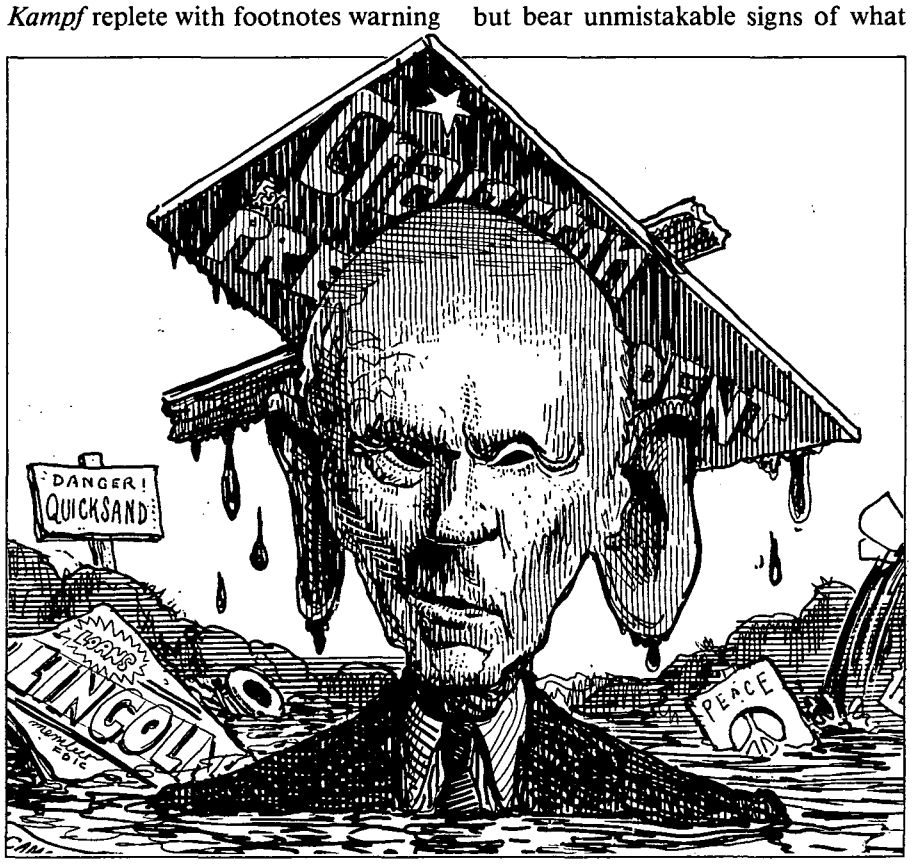
In truth, his "staff" position with INS was intermittent. At first he was unpaid; in fact, most of the time he spent in England was unremunerated. His trip to Germany took place in 1934, during his summer vacation after his sophomore year in college, and the only reporting he did from there was for his hometown weekly in Mountain View, California.

More important, in 1938 he went to Ethiopia—having "officially resigned" from the INS but staying on as an unpaid stringer—as a guest of the *Italian* government, two years after the Italo-Ethiopian war had effectively ended. He promptly landed INS in a libel suit when in the *London Evening Standard* he reported as fact an atrocity story concocted by the Italians to discredit Haile Selassie, the Ethiopian ruler deposed by Mussolini's forces. The emperor sued INS in a London court and won $80,000, a huge sum for the time. Cranston has yet to explain why, at least in this case, he evidently sided with fascist aggressors rather than their victims.

Cranston has instead preferred to draw attention to another outgrowth of his journalistic career: his oft-repeated claim that he was sued by Adolf Hitler for publishing a pulp edition of *Mein Kampf*. His 1986 press biography describes the incident as follows: "In 1939, Cranston, who had read *Mein Kampf* in the original when he was in Germany, discovered that a version being distributed in the U.S. had been carefully edited to delete sections that would arouse Americans to the Nazi threat. Cranston wrote an abridged but accurate tabloid version, interspersed with anti-Nazi explanatory notes. . . . [S]ued in a Connecticut court for copyright infringement, [he and a partner] ceased publication." In earlier versions of his biography, he described his opponents in the suit as "Hitler's agents."

In fact, Cranston was sued for copyright infringement by the old-line firm of Houghton Mifflin, which had already published a translation of *Mein Kampf* replete with footnotes warning American readers of Hitler's aggressive intentions. Yet as late as April 1986, an article in *California* magazine described Cranston as "the only U.S. Senator to have been sued by Hitler (for an unauthorized translation of *Mein Kampf* calling attention to the Führer's anti-Semitism)," adding: "He also tried to help Jews fleeing Nazi Germany" (presumably during his brief summer visit). So much for Cranston the journalistic opponent of fascism.

What about his contribution to the real war against fascism, in which he supposedly turned down a deferment and enlisted in the Army? The war came in 1941. Cranston did not reject deferment and enlist until 1944. In the meantime he held a job at the Office of War Information, where his tenure as chief of OWI's Foreign Languages Division was marred by controversies that remain unresolved but bear unmistakable signs of what today is called a hidden agenda.



At OWI Cranston was responsible for distributing OWI press releases to foreign language newspapers and radio stations in the United States. According to Cranston, his main achievement at OWI was to coordinate the renaming of a Chicago suburb in honor of Lidice, the Czech village wiped out by Nazi troops in 1942. However, Cranston's critics have long asserted that his work at OWI essentially centered on suppressing any news seen as unflattering to Stalin's USSR. The most famous such case involved the Soviet massacre of Polish military officers in the Katyn forest.

When in April 1943 the mass grave at Katyn, near Smolensk, was pointed out to Nazi authorities then controlling the area, they were quick to identify the Soviet secret police as the murderers. The victims had not been seen since 1940, when they were still in Soviet hands as prisoners of war following the 1939 destruction of Poland by the then cooperating Nazi and Stalinist regimes. (Today, the Soviet press admits Soviet responsibility for the massacre.) When the story of Katyn emerged in April 1943, Poles could not bring themselves to lie about the character of the Soviet Union and Soviet designs on Poland, notwithstanding their desire for an Allied victory in the war.

News of Katyn arrived in the U.S. at a time when American liberals and social democrats were expressing doubts of their own about Stalin's USSR. One month before the Katyn story broke, the Soviets had baldly announced the execution in the USSR of Henryk Alter and Viktor Ehrlich, two well-known leaders of the Bund, the Jewish labor organization active for decades in Poland and, naturally, suppressed in the USSR. The Soviets and their American Communist pawns denounced Alter and Ehrlich as agents in a U.S.-Polish plot against Moscow. The ghastly effrontery of this charge was greeted with protest by liberals and labor

Buck Long is the pen name of a writer for a California daily. Lawrence V. Cott is a free-lance writer in San Francisco.

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leaders in the U.S., none of whom could be considered pro-Hitler, headed by such men as New York mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, AFL president William Green, and Republican leader Wendell Willkie.

Indeed, the London-based Polish government in exile rejected the Soviet explanation of the Alter-Ehrlich crime the very weekend that news of the Katyn massacre broke. Nobody had more to gain from a victory over Hitler than the Poles and Jews; but at the same time, few in their ranks wanted to see such a victory turn into a victory for Stalin.

Out of this maelstrom comes the figure of Alan Cranston. Although his work did not involve him in the debates over Ehrlich and Alter, he was quick to interject himself into the Katyn controversy. As the official responsible for feeding war news to the ethnic press, Cranston responded to Katyn by trying to suppress the topic. Backed by OWI director Elmer Davis, Cranston committed the U.S. government to the position that Katyn could only be a Nazi crime.

At WJBK, a Detroit-area radio station, two Polish-language commentators clashed bitterly: one repeated the "official" line of the OWI, while the other read accounts from the Polish representatives in London. Cranston acted quickly to muzzle the latter speaker. At a meeting of broadcast executives shortly thereafter in New York, Cranston defended his decision and used the presence of a representative from the Federal Communications Commission to hint that conflicts over broadcasting content could lead to cancellation of licenses (even though the FCC has never had jurisdiction over content). One radio station manager subsequently confirmed in congressional testimony in 1952 that Cranston had attempted to "try to convince station WJBK . . . not to permit those comments which would indicate Russian guilt."

Cranston himself testified in 1952 that he had only been trying to support the war effort, and had merely asked the offending broadcaster to limit himself to dispatches from "reputable American wire services"—meaning those approved by the Soviet government and the OWI. The 1952 congressional hearings turned up other examples of Cranston's mendacity. Cranston claimed the broadcaster in question was not fired; his contract, however, was not renewed. Calling all wartime warnings about Stalin's plans for Eastern Europe "divisive," Cranston impugned the patriotism of a principal writer for the largest Polish-language paper published in the U.S. He described the Polish exile government in London as a "terrible government which I thought probably was a Nazi power." (This recalled a report Cranston filed with the Office of Strategic Services in 1944, in which he asserted that the Polish Communist forces in the USSR not only were not Communist, but were more popular than the London exile government. The report did not mention Katyn except to suggest that the "missing" officers were not missing at all.)

What was Cranston up to in defending the Soviet version of Katyn? Herbert Romerstein and Stanislav Levchenko, authors of *The KGB Against the "Main Enemy,"* a reference volume on Soviet secret police activity in the U.S., cautiously declare, "It is hard to tell whether this was overzealous patriotism [on behalf of a U.S. wartime ally], but it served a Soviet purpose in covering up a Soviet atrocity."

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The problem is that Cranston's ingenuousness over Katyn was not an isolated incident. In 1943 his work at OWI also embroiled him in a controversy over the assassination of an Italian-American anti-Communist labor leader, Carlo Tresca. As pointed out most recently by Stephen Schwartz in *Commentary* (October 1988), much suspicion about Tresca's murder (which remains unresolved) devolved on the Communists. Cranston's contribution to the case was to attempt to steer attention away from the Communists with the outlandish claim that Tresca had come to favor collaboration with them. For this he was denounced by no less a figure than Norman Thomas, America's most respected radical elder, as well as by Max Eastman and other anti-Communist intellectuals, and by Italian-American labor leaders.

Then there was Cranston's friendship with David Karr, with whom he had fallen in in the late 1930s. Karr was a free-lance writer for the Communist *Daily Worker* and Cranston brought him to OWI. Although Romerstein and Levchenko say "there is no evidence [Cranston] understood he was being used by Karr," Karr was no innocent. He had been involved in NKVD activities in the U.S. at the side of a particularly nasty Soviet agent named Albert E. Kahn. After World War II, Karr became a major player in U.S.-Soviet commercial activities. One of his last ventures involved him in the sale of Soviet gold commemorative coins, with the profits split with Armand Hammer's Occidental Petroleum. Following his death in 1979, *Fortune* magazine commented, "Whispers of a KGB connection followed Karr everywhere." Cranston said, "He had a strong social conscience that made him an intense promoter of détente."

In 1944, Cranston left the OWI. It was then that he turned down—or lost, according to at least one source—his latest deferment and enlisted. The time he says he spent in "the infantry" actually amounted to six weeks of basic training and living off-base with his wife. Soon enough he was reassigned to an information and education unit that produced lecture materials on Allied war aims.

In the decade following the war, Cranston was known mainly as national head of the United World Federalists. There is no evidence he supported the pro-Soviet campaign of Henry Wallace, the 1948 Progressive party presidential candidate. However, in the early 1950s, he returned to governmental politics as a founder of the California Democratic Council, an organization rather similar to the Reform Democratic clubs then favored by "progressive" Democrats in New York. One element in the founding of the CDC was the collapse of the Independent Progressive party (IPP), the California wing of Henry Wallace's party. By 1952 it was clear that the Progressives' day had passed, and hundreds of California Communists and Communist sympathizers made their way into the Democratic ranks. Thus, it was no accident that the CDC early on adopted a position in favor of Red China, or that a later leader, Simon Casady, wound up a leading New Left figure in the sixties.

The disappearance of the IPP and rise of the CDC had something in common with the demise of the old American Labor party (ALP) in New York, a local body under Communist control. There was a marked difference, however, in the success each had in infiltrating the Democratic party of their respective states. The New York ALP and the state's relatively large Communist organization were based mainly in the remnants of Communist controlled or influenced labor and ethnic groups, with slight representation among teachers, government employees, and other white collars. By contrast, the California left had its labor and ethnic allies, but it also enjoyed much greater support among the new intelligentsia and other elements of the Golden State's burgeoning middle class. Cranston emerged in the 1950s as a standard-bearer of this new-style "progressivism."

In some ways, he was an ideal choice. To die-hard fellow travelers he could speak of peace and disarmament, and of his storied career as an anti-fascist. To the rest of the state's voters he would come to stress his local roots, his labor and civil rights alliances, and, eventually, his age and physical fitness. He was elected state controller in 1958 (the first Democrat in that post in seventy-two years) and re-elected in 1962. Turned out in the 1966 Reagan sweep, he quickly regrouped and in 1968 won election to the U.S. Senate,

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From the beginning of his second career in government, Cranston showed a curious addiction to the political methods he displayed during his tenure at OWI. Writing in the *San Jose Mercury News* in 1983, Carl M. Cannon described the senator as one who "since his early days in California . . . has shown carelessness in his comments about opponents. He has been willing to attack them on grounds that have nothing to do with substantive issues—grounds, in fact, that are sometimes untrue."

One such incident involved a well-known liberal and potential rival for the 1964 Senate race whose service to the party dated from the New Deal. Cranston reportedly obtained a photograph of the individual in a sexually compromising position. He offered the photo to Tom Braden, the television commentator who was then editor of the *Oceanside Blade-Tribune*, a local daily. Braden, who has "reluctantly" confirmed the truth of the story, added that he did not choose to go public with it for fear of harming the person in the photograph. "I considered it slime," commented Braden. "If I wrote about it, I would be the same as [Cranston]."

Braden added that he found it impossible to trust Cranston after this incident. "I considered it amusingly evil," Braden said.

Cranston has denied showing the photograph to Braden, but acknowledged that "somebody on my staff" may have done so. During his brief presidential campaign Cranston visited Braden's home and begged him to keep silent about the matter. (The individual in the photo has declined all comment.)

Cranston has employed similar tactics against Republican opponents. In 1966 he issued a document labeling gubernatorial candidate Ronald Reagan a "front man" for the John Birch Society. In 1983 he called Reagan a "tyrant." During confirmation hearings that year on Kenneth Adelman's nomination to head the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, he charged Adelman with believing that "it would be helpful to the United States . . . if South Africa were to use nuclear weapons against their own blacks or against neighboring blacks." In April 1983 he addressed a letter to every member of the Senate Judiciary Committee denouncing California Republican jurist John P. Vukasin, Jr. as unfit for confirmation as a U.S. District Court judge. When challenged, Cranston claimed Vukasin had previously been rejected when nominated by Richard Nixon and that he was "prejudiced against women and minorities." In fact, Vukasin had never before been nominated to the federal bench and he was confirmed with the support of black and female attorneys in his home county.

Cranston again used South Africa to sling mud at Republican opponent Ed Zschau in the 1986 Senate race. David Johnston, a political reporter for the *San Francisco Examiner*, saw links here to the old Cranston. "He and Zschau disagreed on a deep philosophical level," Johnston wrote. "He really sees South Africa as like Germany in the early '30s, what he had seen as a young man, and [he believes] that the Reagan attitude is the same as that of the United States and the western allies in the early '30s—an attitude of tolerance."

With polls in mid-February showing Cranston with a 69 percent disapproval rating among California voters, political journalists in his state now regard Cranston as the politician most damaged by the Lincoln Savings and Loan scandal. Ostensibly, the case amounts to nothing more than political corruption, which saw five U.S. senators—the fabled Keating Five—putting possibly undue pressure on federal bank regulators on behalf of Lincoln head Charles Keating in return for the more than $1.3 million he'd contributed to their campaigns and political causes. But as *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter Mark Z. Barabak reminded readers in January, more than $900,000 of those funds was solicited by Cranston. Although Cranston now claims to have had "an unchallenged and unblemished record of integrity during my more than twenty years in the Senate," he again is engaging in some dissembling. In 1983 the *New Republic* identified Cranston as controller of the largest secret slush fund in the Senate, which saw him transfer $66,000 in campaign monies to a private account that went to cover travel and lodging for his wife as well as the services of speechwriters, a voice coach, and other personnel for his presidential run. Cranston refused to respond to the revelation other than to allow an aide to release only a select number of relevant documents.

Cranston is finding it more difficult to evade the charges raised in the Lincoln case. As his chances for re-election to the Senate in 1992 all but vanish, Cranston has fallen back on an old method of damage control and lashed out at the Keating Five's nemesis, former Federal Home Loan Bank Board chairman Edwin Gray, calling him an expert in "the Hitlerian technique of the Big Lie." Like a California Ceausescu, Alan Cranston intends to remain defiant to the end. Old habits die hard. □

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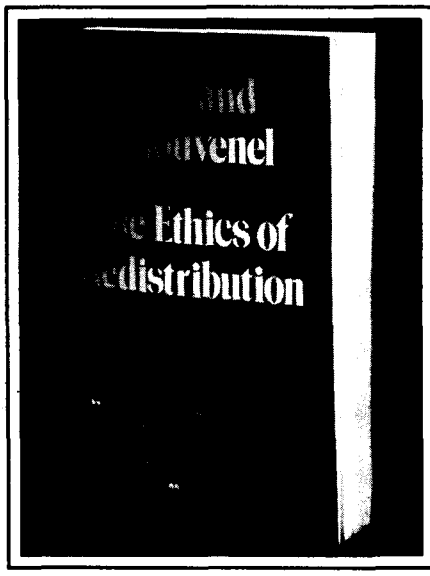

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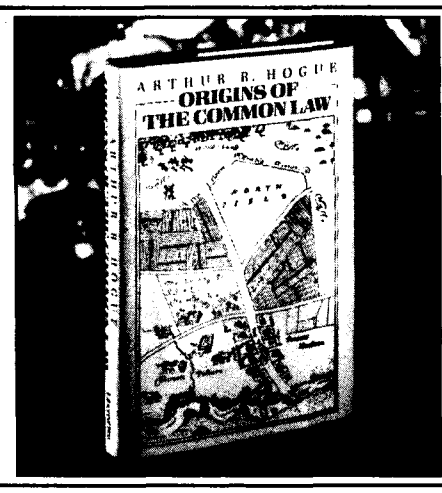

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Maurice Cranston

AMERICAN VS. BRITISH CONSERVATISM: AN EVEN MATCH?

Each variety has its strengths and weaknesses. We have our Constitution and our individualism; they have Mrs. Thatcher and Michael Oakeshott.

Conservatism, it is often said, is not the same thing in America as it is in England, not so vigorous, so well-organized, or so well-equipped intellectually to answer the challenge of radicalism. A recent editorial in this magazine predicted that the Bush Administration would be likely to follow a vaguely center-right drift in the absence of the kind of hard thinking that might direct it toward distinctively conservative policies.[1]

This may be the case, but I would argue that the strengths and weaknesses of American and British conservatism are more evenly matched than Mr. Tyrrell's analysis suggests, and also that it is necessary to see just what the differences are between the two conservatisms both as movements and as systems of political thought.

The first obvious advantage of British conservatism is having a parliamentary party that has had a majority in the legislature more often than a minority since World War II, while the Republican party in America, insofar as it can be considered a conservative party, has had a majority in the House of Representatives for less than five of the past fifty years. To be in opposition for a time is not a bad thing for a political party, since it enables its members to think and speak freely without the constraints of office. But unfortunately the almost permanent majority of the Democratic party in Washington has prompted its members to develop the mentality of the one-party state; which means that their politics has progressively relapsed toward power-brokering, intrigue, and, far too often, corruption, veiled by pronouncements of empty radical rhetoric. At such a level of debate, coherent conservative policies can hardly be expected to emerge.

There is another development in America that could not happen in England, and which creates a dilemma for American conservatism, and that is the extent to which the judiciary has taken over the legislative function from the U.S. Congress. No longer do American citizens, through their elected representatives, decide what to do about such questions as public education, abortion, pornography, or even rent control; the judges rule, and often their decisions are such that the ordinary citizen cannot even understand let alone authorize, since American judges have taken it upon themselves to redefine the English language so that words like "family," "obscenity," and so forth no longer mean what everybody who speaks English thinks they mean. The embarrassment for the American conservative is that this is all done within the system of the American Constitution, even though in defiance of that Constitution's principles of separating the executive, legislative, and judiciary powers.

American conservatives venerate the Constitution, and they are surely right to do so, for it gives them something more than an attachment to the idea of tradition which is all that British conservatives have in common among themselves. Assuredly the U.S. Constitution is a liberal document in the classical sense of "liberal" and a product of the Reason of the Enlightenment, but its confirmation by experience, its success in preserving stable government down several successive generations, has given it the authority of time. Since the Constitution is the original contract, so to speak, on which the nation as a nation is based, every American must respect it; but the conservative cherishes it especially because it ensures the permanent rule of law and preserves Americans against those dangers—whether of anarchy or despotism—to which other nations are prone.

The Constitution confers another advantage on American conservatives: it provides a bond of unity among them. British conservatives are much less united, although the discipline that prevails in the British Conservative party may prompt foreign observers to think otherwise. The deepest division is between those British conservatives who derive their basic philosophy—their conception of the human condition—from Edmund Burke, and those who take it from Thomas Hobbes. The Burkean view is that the human race is composed of natural societies or communities. The Hobbesian view is that the human race is composed of individuals, self-protective and often competitive. The Burkean view has inspired the conservative politics of Disraeli and Harold Macmillan and those who share their "One Nation" creed. The Hobbesian view has inspired the conservative policies of Mrs. Thatcher, and is at present the dominant school of thought on the conservative benches in the British House of Commons, if not in the House of Lords.

Hobbesian conservatism in its present "Thatcherite" formulation passes from its belief that the nation is composed of individuals to the conclusion that the public good is best achieved when everyone's energy is harnessed to what he most enjoys, making life better for himself—working together with others when he wants to, like an oarsman willingly rowing together with his crew, but never forced to act as a member of a team by the dictates of the state. Disraeli and Macmillan and their followers are, by contrast, paternalistic; conceiving of the nation as a kind of family writ large, they press the more prosperous members of the family to look after their needy brethren, even demanding by the time Macmillan reached office in 1957 sacrifices of the better-off that are hardly distinguishable from socialism. Although both Disraeli and Macmillan were middle-

[1] "Bush and the Conservatives," by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. *TAS*, October 1989.

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class men (despite the fact that they rose to be Earls), they tried to reinforce their "One Nation" conservatism by an appeal to the aristocratic ideal of *noblesse oblige*, the duty of the lord to look after the poor, which probably explains the greater support that paternalistic conservatism has today in the House of Lords than in the House of Commons.

I do not observe such a split between Burkeans and Hobbesians in American conservatism, which has been able to combine Burke's philosophy of natural society with a distinctively American belief in personal liberty and individualism. Nowhere is this synthesis better expressed than in the work of the best American poet of our time: Robert Frost. The noted Burke scholar Peter J. Stanlis (writing in the *Intercollegiate Review* in 1985) has drawn attention to the unity of vision between Frost's poetry and Frost's philosophy in a way that may surprise many readers: surprise them because the progressive American literary establishment has for years been asserting that Frost should only be read as a poet and his "reactionary" prose ignored. Frost had a deep sense of human fellowship: of men, each defined by his individual freedom, being held together by the mediation of culture, as distinct from "all pigging together," as he put it, under the regimentation of "collectivist love."

Frost in his writings expresses a certain sensibility that is characteristic of American conservatism, a feeling both for the people and for the individual that is not found elsewhere. It is evidence, I suppose, of the extent to which democracy has come to be deeply ingrained in American political culture. Compare Frost with British literary men thought of as "conservative"—Chesterton, Belloc, Wyndham Lewis, Evelyn Waugh, Eliot (and Eliot would wish to be considered British)—and one finds in all of them no love for democracy but a profound mistrust of democracy, and no great enthusiasm for personal liberty either. The British literary right has always been influenced by the French literary right with its nostalgia for royalty and chivalry and the authoritarian Church.

American conservatism has been spared this influence; the few American writers who felt it, such as Ezra Pound, have simply gone abroad and gone fascist. The most notable foreign influence on American conservatism in our time has been German rather than French, and has come through philosophy, not literature. A fairly recent book by the late Senator John East, *The American Conservative Movement* (Regnery Gateway, 1986), names as the movement's leading contemporary theorists Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin, and Ludwig von Mises, German-educated immigrants, side by side with the American-born Russell Kirk, Richard Weaver, Frank Meyer, and Willmoore Kendall. I would not myself count Ludwig von Mises as an American conservative, but rather as a laissez-faire liberal economist who, with Friedrich A. Hayek, has had more influence on Thatcherite policies in London than on anyone in the United States. But both Strauss and Voegelin are significant figures in the recent history of American conservatism, especially in the universities. They were perhaps no more enthusiastic about majority rule than any other continental professor, but they both provided new reasons for their students to venerate the American Constitution, to uphold religion and morality and virtue, and, what was more original, to look to the political philosophy of the ancient world for all the wisdom that is needed in modernity.

I do not observe such a split between Burkeans and Hobbesians in American conservatism, which has been able to combine Burke's philosophy of natural society with a distinctively American belief in personal liberty and individualism.

There, again, is a marked contrast with the kind of conservatism that has gained ground in British universities in recent years. Here the most influential figure is Michael Oakeshott, whose conservatism is much like that of David Hume, based on skepticism rather than belief in religion or natural law or the classics or anything else. Like Hume, Oakeshott claims that in the absence of all rational certainty, political problems should be attended to in the light of experience; custom and habit being better guides to action than ideologies or the blueprints of social engineers. Oakeshott is insistent that the duties of the state should be confined to its only authentic function, the promulgation and enforcement of law. But whereas American conservatives, including Strauss and Voegelin, point to the concrete agent of the Constitution, Oakeshott invokes something much more elusive, a tradition of behavior that incorporates the practical knowledge of successive generations. Insofar as such a sophisticated form of political philosophy has any impact on popular political attitudes, the influence of Oakeshott has probably been to reinforce the Thatcherite school of British conservatism—if only because of its individualism, its demand for a minimal state, and its attachment to freedom—freedom being the thing that the political experience of the English has taught them to understand and appreciate best.

It would be fair to ask if there is any British equivalent to American neoconservatism, or that body of thought expounded in such journals as the *Public Interest* and *Commentary* by Irving Kristol, Nathan Glazer, Norman Podhoretz, and others who have the distinction of being liberals who were willing to recognize that the old liberal policies of social engineering and welfarism did not achieve their stated goals of social amelioration, but instead were carrying America toward that tutelary despotism which Tocqueville had warned against in the nineteenth century. Tocqueville was converted from liberalism to conservatism by the evidence of his own social science; and American neoconservatives have almost all trodden that same path. In England, faithful readers of the magazine *Encounter* might notice political writers who were once on the left—Paul Johnson, for example, or Woodrow Wyatt or Hugh Thomas—having moved to the right, but no one has wanted to call them "neoconservatives" because the dominant, Thatcherite stream of official conservatism has readily assimilated them.

Occasionally, indeed, especially in continental Europe, Mrs. Thatcher is herself called "neoconservative." Noel O'Sullivan, a leading British historian

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of political thought, explains why in his entry on conservatism in the *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought* (1987). He points out that the wartime success of government control of the economy encouraged postwar British conservatives to perpetuate planning the control of consumer demand, full employment, and the welfare state and thus to accept "a drift towards collectivism which, by the mid-1970s, had become so powerful that it seemed to many to have left conservatism without any coherent identity." Both British Thatcherite conservatism and American neoconservatism, O'Sullivan suggests, mark an attempt to reverse this process; to recover for conservatism its specific and historic character.

Since Mrs. Thatcher's aim is to recover something lost rather than introduce something new, she is true to the central ideals of conservative philosophy. If Macmillan could claim to be the heir of Disraeli, prime minister between 1868 and 1880, Mrs. Thatcher could fairly claim to be preserving the heritage of the British Conservative party's first prime minister, Sir Robert Peel. He was elected in 1834 soon after the party was founded on a manifesto that called for law and order, including the strengthening of the police force, tax reform, and the reconciliation of landed and industrial interests. Mrs. Thatcher may also invoke the precedent of Lord Salisbury, prime minister for fourteen years between 1885 and 1902, who was as impatient with Disraeli's innovations as is Mrs. Thatcher with those of Macmillan and Macmillan's protégé, Edward Heath.

But of course Mrs. Thatcher has herself been an innovator, and she could not have achieved her objective of reestablishing economic freedom and releasing the entrepreneurial energies of citizens without dismantling the collectivist system constructed by thirty-five years of consensus politics between Macmillanite Conservatives and the Labour party. This in turn meant that she had to galvanize her own party, rally the support of the ranks, battle with rival factions, and change her cabinet frequently without regard to personal feelings. In a word, she has had to be the politician for twenty-four hours a day.

It was often said in newspapers that Mr. Reagan "dozed off" at political meetings. Whether this is true or not, it looks much as if a great many American conservatives dozed off while he was President; partly because he did none of the things that Mrs. Thatcher has done and does to keep British conservatives awake.

There is one area, however, where American conservatives suspect British conservatives of slackness, and that is the matter of opposition to Communism. One reason why British conservatives have had less to say about Communism is that British liberals have never been apologists for it to the extent that American liberals have. In England, apologists for Communism have been more or less confined to the left of the Labour party and to avowed Marxists even further left. British conservatives have not had to battle with the vast edifice of liberal nonsense that in America presented the pre-Gorbachev Soviet regimes as peace-loving, popular, and caring experiments in guided democracy. Even when the Labour party was persuaded to advocate unilateral nuclear disarmament, the case had to be presented on pacifist, rather than pro-Communist, grounds.

Frost in his writings expresses a certain sensibility that is characteristic of American conservatism, a feeling both for the people and for the individual that is not found elsewhere.

In this respect, Mr. Reagan was more fortunate. As head of both state and government in a presidential system, he could be, like Charles de Gaulle, above politics. Although the American press always called him "a conservative," Mr. Reagan contrived to run the government in his own way—again very like De Gaulle—with an authority derived directly from the people, without much mediation from party politicians. He responded to various crises and opportunities with a kind of intuitive skill that owed little to conservative political theory. If Mr. Bush proves a model conservative President, that will be largely because Mr. Reagan handed on to him an America in pretty good shape, which was not the case when he himself took it over from Jimmy Carter. Mr. Bush has much to conserve.

Adherents of the British Labour party have also had to admit that recent events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have confirmed the conservative thesis that nationalized economies do not work and that a free market is a necessary instrument of free politics. The Labour party has been anxiously explaining that its form of socialism is a mixture of public and private ownership and not a totalitarian system of the kind that has collapsed in Eastern Europe. The peculiar suggestion of American liberals that Gorbachev has somehow vindicated their sympathy for the Stalin-Brezhnev regime by repudiating that regime is not one that is heard in British progressive circles. Far from being accused, with American conservatives, of being obsolete by their opponents, the British conservatives are admitted to have been ahead of their rivals in understanding the international situation, Mrs. Thatcher having been the first leader in Western Europe to recognize that Mr. Gorbachev was about to revolutionize the Soviet system.

Opponents of Mrs. Thatcher have to concentrate on policies where her government is on the defensive: domestic affairs and the economy. Her economic policies have not had the success of those of the White House in America, although she achieved much in her first few years in office to reinvigorate British industry and commerce. Debates in the House of Commons are now televised, and it is my belief that television favors the opposition, since its spokesmen have not the responsibility of office and can say anything they like to entertain and charm the viewers.

The Thatcher government nonetheless enjoys a friendlier press in England than either the Reagan or Bush Administration has had in America. The British TV chains are fairly impartial, and among important London newspapers only the *Observer*, the *Guardian*, and the *Daily Mirror* are more favorable to Labour than to the government. The newest and most interesting London paper, the *Independent*, is critical of but not hostile toward Mrs. Thatcher. The rest of the press is fairly enthusiastically behind her. This may give a false impression of her strength. For although her government has introduced a substantial measure of economic freedom, the economy is still "mixed," and the mix is not a wholly satisfactory one.

British trade unions, for example, remain extremely powerful, and by their strikes they have pushed up inflation in Britain to the highest level in several years. And although several industries have been privatized, there is a growth of industrial and commercial monopolies that is undermining competition. Mrs. Thatcher has been unlucky in having inherited from previous governments a bureaucracy that is unable, or unwilling, to work out successful schemes for the reform of education, health services, and local government. The "poll tax" to be introduced this year has much to be said for it, but it looks unfair, and the opposition will have no difficulty in making people hate it. One way and another, I do not think the prospects of Mrs. Thatcher winning the next election are especially good. This is partly because the center parties have collapsed, and more center supporters may vote next time for Mr. Kinnock than for Mrs. Thatcher; but it is also because British conservatives, like American conservatives, are often prone to shrink from the unpleasantness of current controversies, to dream nostalgically of the days before urban decay and drugs and uncontrolled crime and hijackings and hostages and hooligans and kids, and then take Voltaire's advice to turn away from the world altogether and cultivate their gardens. □

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Piotr Brozyna and Mark Lilla

DISMANTLING SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY (II)

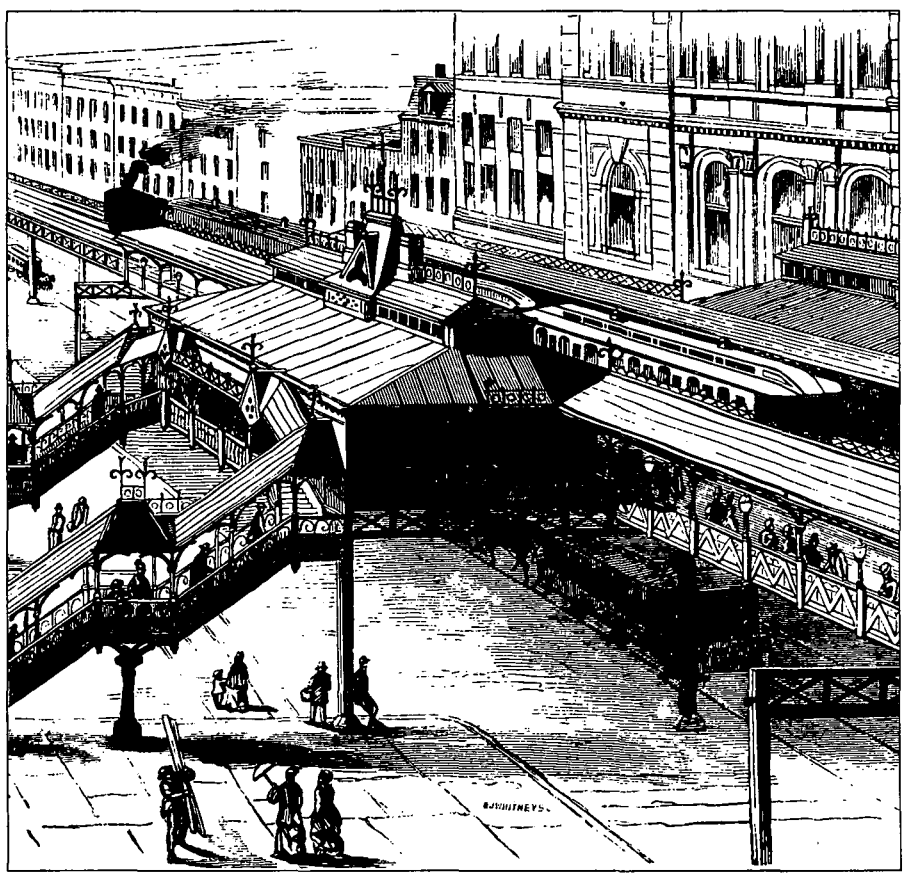
Now that the Poles are free to be capitalists, their government must play the leading role in creating conditions that will allow business and trade to flourish on a Western scale. Without strong public institutions, Polish capitalism won't have a chance.

In our previous article on the present Polish situation (see February *TAS*) we reviewed the postwar intellectual transformation of Polish economic opinion from an anti-capitalist consensus of Catholics and Communists to a new, if somewhat resigned, agreement on the principles of free-market liberalism. It is our impression that no rival economic theory now challenges that new consensus, and that whatever political arrangements or compromises the Poles make in the near future—on taxes, subsidies, the welfare state—there is little doubt that they are all capitalists now. As more than one social democrat has remarked over the past few years, even those Poles who dream of a Swedish-style welfare state now recognize that Sweden is a capitalist country, not a socialist one.

Since we wrote that article, the first phase of the economic "shock" plan drawn up by Harvard professor Jeffrey Sachs has begun under the watchful eye of Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz. It has been . . . well, something of a shock. Previously controlled prices now float with the market and the *zloty*, creating a revolution in relative prices that will take some time to stabilize. Prices of natural gas and electricity, always kept artificially low and now only partially decontrolled, have quadrupled in a month; gasoline and insurance are now so expensive that more than 10,000 automobile owners have turned in their license plates; lines for previously rationed items have shrunken drastically since few can afford what they once waited hours to buy. But on the supply side there is also movement. Farmers have begun carting their own produce to nearby towns and have been selling it on the streets, undercutting the arthritic state stores, and there is an unprecedented variety of meat and poultry now available for those who can pay. More important still, the hyper-inflation that once reached 1,000 percent has already slowed to 70 percent in January and was predicted to fall even further to nearly six percent in February as the debt-inflated Polish economy grinds to a halt.

Yet despite these unsettling changes to a once predictably deteriorating way of life, the Poles seem to have found new reserves of "solidarity" to manage them. Representatives of some peasant and workers organizations have complained that their members bear an unfair burden during this transition, and one farmer even chained himself to the gates of parliament recently in a gesture of protest. But by and large the Poles seem to accept the necessity of suffering through these additional hardships. There is no way of predicting whether this willingness can persist, especially since the inevitable layoffs and plant-closings will not begin for a few months. Poles are used to making do without meat or gasoline, but they have never before faced the unsettling prospect of losing protected jobs and supporting families during long periods of unemployment. The government's nightmare is that, as the layoffs begin, disgruntled unemployed workers will join with frightened small farmers to form a parliamentary coalition to block the necessary "shock" reforms. Such a reaction could only work to the advantage of ambitious demagogues on the Catholic-agrarian right and the nomenklatura robber barons of the Communist (now "Social Democracy") party, both eagerly awaiting the Mazowiecki government's collapse.

However serious this threat may be, it is a short-term one: in the next twelve months we will know whether the "shock" was too large to be handled. Thereafter the Poles will enter the medium term, where the challenges will be of an entirely different sort and equally formidable. As we noted briefly in our previous article, the medium term will be dominated less by purely economic and political reforms than by *institutional* ones. The Western press has been virtually silent about these institutional reforms and seems not to understand why Poland's economic future will depend on them. The day-to-day crises are interesting and distracting enough, to be sure. But Western observers also seem to be under the libertarian illusion that a free market will grow up naturally in Poland so long as there is no active government or union interference in the economy.



This is simply not true in Poland—or anywhere, for that matter. Every advanced capitalist economy in the world depends on the support of strong public institutions that capitalism by itself does not create. Businesses need ample public utilities, postal services that function, unbribable customs officials, honest tax collectors, university-trained professionals, and so on. Westerners take these institutions for granted because their governments are stable and their political customs deeply rooted, and they are often shocked to discover countries where these assumptions cannot be made. Thus, when Western firms abandon underdeveloped nations because "things don't work there," they do not usually mean that laws of economics fail to operate in tropical climes. What they really mean is that the necessary public institutions that support economic activity are nonexistent, dysfunctional, or hopelessly corrupt.

Poland is not an underdeveloped country. It is, as one journalist joked, a "formerly developed" nation. There is an important truth buried in this quip: because Polish Communism blocked the restoration of free political and economic institutions that once ex-

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isted before the war, its own sclerotic institutions now occupy the field. This difference is decisive. In underdeveloped nations there are no public works; in Poland they have been provided by large incompetent staffs hired with party patronage. In underdeveloped nations the tax and regulatory systems are never stable; in Poland there has been a paralyzingly stable system of supported monopolies controlled by a central planning office. In underdeveloped countries there is no legal system for settling private disputes; in Poland there has been an enormous one filled with lawyers and judges whose job until now had been to follow party directives. In underdeveloped countries public agencies must be constructed from scratch; in Poland, "socialist" ones must first be dismantled before new ones can be built.

Oddly enough, these differences could all work in Poland's favor. No one knows how to build public institutions *de novo* in underdeveloped nations, but the Poles at least have them, if only in their perverse forms. The trick will be to transform or replace them without threatening the existing economic tissue or the social consensus underlying the reforms now under way. This is the real challenge facing the Mazowiecki government in the medium term, and it deserves the attention of all those in the West whose interest in Poland extends beyond the present crisis. To illustrate this point we have chosen to review three areas where institutional reform will be most urgent. Each demonstrates how heavily Poland's long-term economic health will also depend on public initiative.

Public Infrastructure

First-time visitors to Warsaw Pact cities are always surprised to see traces of the Second World War that have long since disappeared from the rest of Europe. Bullet-riddled walls and rubble-strewn lots are not uncommon. Yet these scars on the urban landscape are only superficial signs of a more dramatic underinvestment in public infrastructure by these Communist regimes over the past forty years. Poverty—the imposed poverty of a centralized economy—helps to explain the absence of modern technological wonders, but not of the most basic services such as clean running water, working telephones, and a regular electrical current. The fact is that these "socialist" regimes felt no need to provide such services to their voiceless masses, and chose instead to waste resources on heavy-industrialization projects that never became profitable. As a consequence, water is nonpotable in most cities and must be boiled before use, and electrical currents fluctuate so wildly that one hears of high-tech computers bought with precious foreign currency now lying unused in government offices because they keep short-circuiting.

In Poland the most debilitating deterioration has taken place in the telecommunications system. There is fewer than one telephone for every ten individuals in the country, and the number of receivers would have to be *quintupled* if Poland were simply to reach the European average. We have learned (through frustrating experience in writing this article) that there are only 1,500 international lines in and out of Poland, rendering communication with the United States or the rest of Europe simply impossible for much of the day. Domestic service is not much better, and callers must dial and redial repeatedly just to reach the other side of town. American telephone experts have estimated that an investment of $15 billion would be required to bring Polish communications up to European standards—clearly an impossibility in the near future. But even to render the system reliable enough to guarantee the transmission of electronic data would require a $3 billion investment. The World Bank has offered to put up $300 million and the Polish government is now planning to end the government's monopoly over telecommunications in the hope of attracting private capital. But it will be a very long time before a new, functional public "grid" necessary for private telecommunications can replace the present one.

Besides this "hard" infrastructure built with steel, concrete, and copper wire, there also is a "soft" infrastructure lacking in Poland today. This is made up of publicly trained men and women working in services on which business also depends. Poland is in desperate need of educated professionals—accountants, statisticians, engineers—that the recently liberated universities will not be capable of providing for many years to come. (Countless professionals trained under the Communist regime left Poland in the brain drain of the last decade or two, and at this stage they are unlikely to disrupt their lives in the West to return to the new Poland.) This lack of publicly trained personnel has already hamstrung the government in its efforts to attract private investors. Since Poland is a new market, an unstable one, and not yet fully open, and given that few foreign businessmen speak Polish, the government will have to act as intermediary between foreign capital and local markets. Every indicator is that few individuals in the Polish government know how to play that role today, and we have already heard complaints from businessmen that "there is no one to talk to there." Neither in Warsaw nor in foreign embassies are there truly professional business liaisons; appointments are made and not kept, rules on bidding are unclear or suspicious, and no one wants to take responsibility. The "soft" infrastructure needed to allow for a free flow of economic information simply does not exist.

Another sector where this "training gap" could prove decisive is banking.

Western observers seem to be under the libertarian illusion that a free market will grow up naturally in Poland so long as there is no active government or union interference in the economy.

Until recently the Polish banking system was dominated by the Narodowy Bank Polski (NBP), which served both as a central bank and finance monopolist. Government agencies were obliged to pass all their receipts through it and received their loans and subsidies in return. Besides controlling the money supply like any other European central bank, the NBP also made bureaucratic decisions about particular movements of capital within the economy as a whole.

This monopoly ended on January 1 of this year, and soon there will be private banks to join the handful of smaller government banks that once controlled the accounts of individuals and private firms. But all these banks, public and private, will suffer the effects of previous bureaucratic centralization for some time. The NBP, for example, is still staffed by the same incompetent bureaucrats who have little or no training in economics, finance, or even accounting. (An American economist we spoke to recently reported that a long conversation with NBP officials convinced him that they simply did not understand the economic concept of "money.") Private banks will also have difficulty finding sufficiently trained personnel to offer standard banking services. Moreover, many of the basic tools of modern banking simply do not exist in Poland today—telephones, computers, even *zloty* counting-machines. Private training and investment will slowly fill some of these gaps, but at some point the government itself must make these same investments in material and education.

Public Administration

As the example of banking indicates, the heavy centralization of the economy inherited by the Mazowiecki government means that many management problems eventually to be inherited by private business must first be confronted by governmental agencies that will dominate the scene in the medium term. Public administration now, business administration later: that is the order of priorities. But even in the long term Poland will need an able, well-trained professional civil service to build its public infrastructure and to provide standard services. Such a cadre will not be easy to establish.

The largest stumbling block, of course, is the cadre that already exists. Solidarity and the new government decided quite soon after coming to power that there would be no purges, no "decommification" that might hand the ex-Communist party a natural class of resentful, disinherited public workers. Even if Solidarity learned to distrust the myth that "Poles will not fire upon Poles," they think it more prudent now to let it be said that "Poles will not fire Poles." Theirs was, after all, a bloodless revolution meant to restore national unity. And from a perfectly practical viewpoint Solidarity knows that it still needs people to man the governmental machinery.

The nomenklatura problem has two faces, national and local. At the national level, the problem is less severe. Many of the offensive members of the high nomenklatura have already left their jobs to join General Jaruzelski's presidential staff, and others are using their advantageous economic and social positions to start businesses or buy up cheap land. But at the local level there exist mafia-like connections between ex-party officials, monopoly managers, the police, and nomenklatura businessmen, and this knot will only be untied by legal force. This too will take time. A law must be passed on returning Communist party property to the state (as is already under way in Hungary) and strict rules must be established to regulate the privatization of public enterprises to ensure that these mafiosi do not end up running the local economies. Wild stories of profiteering and illegal "privatization" are already circulating throughout Poland.

Below this leadership level the problem is somewhat different. Deep in the bowels of state bureaucracies we find functionaries who are, for the most part, simply scared and incompetent clock-punchers. Reforming this large non-workforce will be an extremely long and delicate procedure. The gov-

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ernment has less to fear from active resistance to its policies than from the lassitude of Communist administrative habit. Eventually Poland will need to train its civil servants in the skills and ethos of administration, and some funds for bureaucrats' "retooling" have already been set aside. But before the civil service can be completely rebuilt, a new legal and constitutional framework must be put into place. At the end of last December the Polish parliament changed the basic contours of the constitution: references to the "leading role of the Communist party" were deleted, as were professions of friendship to the Soviet Union, and the liberty to own property and organize politically are now guaranteed. The country is no longer called the Polish People's Republic, but the Republic of Poland, and the official Polish eagle again wears a crown. But before the end of 1990 an entirely new constitution will be drafted and voted upon (probably in a referendum). A special parliamentary committee is already at work drawing up possible blueprints. This new constitution will redefine the separation of powers among the various governmental branches at the national and local level, as well as the relative powers of national and local institutions overall. Only when this constitution is in place will a definitive reform of the civil service be possible, and with it the highly politicized legal system.

Public Monopolies

Officially, Polish government policy is that economic planning has been abolished and that most public monopolies will be dissolved shortly. But in reality the government will be forced to continue planning because the system of monopolies it has inherited cannot be sold off or dissolved overnight. It has already learned that there are few "guardian angels" like Barbara Piasecka Johnson ready to buy up unprofitable factories and shipyards in the hope of turning them around. (In fact, at this writing the widow Johnson has evidently changed her mind about saving the former Lenin Shipyard.) Until those enterprises are sold or dismantled, the Polish government will have to run them: making production decisions, hiring and firing, and perhaps even selling their goods.

This is a daunting task even under ideal conditions. As every economist knows, it is almost impossible to make pricing and investment decisions in the Alice-in-Wonderland world of command economies, and there is a serious risk that bad decisions within the monopolies could cause serious distortions in other sectors. The new managers of these monopolies will share the additional burden of having to work within severe political constraints; they must try to minimize unemployment, encourage competition, and ensure that the nomenklatura does not exploit its advantages. In short, they are being asked to eliminate jobs and to save them, to run factories and to dissolve them, and to sell off hardware without enriching a previously favored class. All this is to be accomplished by people with very little economic training and certainly no real business experience.

Some of the larger industrial and natural-resource monopolies may prove rather simple to dissolve quickly (though the recent violent debates over the administration of coal mining show that dissolution will never be without struggle). But others are so firmly rooted in daily Polish economic life that it could take months or years to loosen their grip on commerce and allow competitors to be born. The most visible example of such a monopoly today is the system of agricultural "cooperatives." In Western countries cooperatives earn their name: they are (or originated as) truly joint ventures of farmers who needed to store, wholesale, and process their products, or wanted to reduce the cost of agricultural machinery, fertilizers, seeds, and so forth. In Poland, however, the "cooperatives" were actually run by the government with little input from the "members" themselves. The "cooperative" directors simply played their part in the economic planning game, setting unreal retail prices for the consumer and paying farmers with a phantom *zloty*.

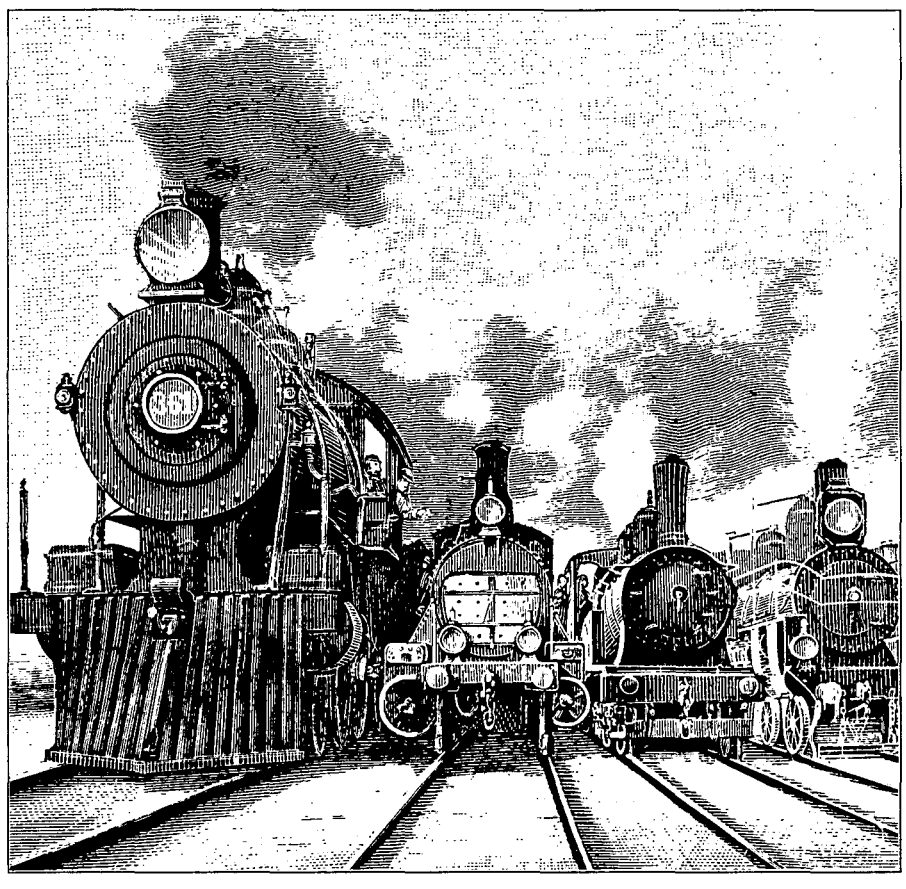
But when agricultural prices were decontrolled by the Mazowiecki government last year, the "cooperatives" proclaimed their legal independence and continued their work, acting as the dominant agricultural wholesaler in the Polish economy. The results were predictable. Unable or unwilling to let the price mechanism function, the "cooperatives" raised retail prices to unheard of levels while reducing payments to farmers as much as possible—a perfect monopoly/monopsony strategy. While the "cooperative" coffers filled, the farmers had no incentive to produce, and stocks of already expensive products were declining in the stores.

Parliament finally managed to scale back the powers of the "cooperatives" early this year, though not until after a serious struggle with the cooperatives' administrators. And the farmers themselves are very frightened of the changes in store. Polish farms are extremely small, most lack electricity and running water, and there has been little investment in agricultural machinery. It is inevitable that farms will be consolidated in the future, and this is what the peasants fear most. During this period of transition the government is going to have to gain the confidence of the peasant population by taking other measures to stabilize the agricultural markets. There is already talk of American-style price support and subsidy programs, all of which would have to be run by the government. In short, more planning. Until a truly competitive system of wholesaling or cooperatives grows up, the government will be forced to help manage the agricultural economy.

American telephone experts have estimated that an investment of $15 billion would be required to bring Polish communications up to European standards.

Our point in presenting these examples is not to suggest that there are insurmountable barriers to building capitalism in Poland. It is simply to remind Western observers that Polish socialism must first be dismantled and that, in the medium term at least, the government will be responsible for establishing the preconditions for a flourishing market economy. That economy will never "take off" without the provision of public infrastructure, the founding of an independent public administration, and sound management of the remaining public monopolies so as to minimize market distortions.

We also mean to suggest that Westerners truly interested in Poland's long-term economic health might want to consider how they might assist during this transitional period. The French government, for example, always eager to export Gallic *dirigisme* around the globe, has just initiated a series of internships for local Polish politicians, who will spend time in French towns this year learning how government ought to work. There is even discussion of establishing such internships for bureaucrats as well. Americans, perhaps convinced that economies are governed best when governed least, seem prepared to invest and to give economic advice when needed, but with the exception of the impressive work done by the National Forum Foundation and, on a smaller scale, the USIA and the *Congressional Quarterly*, we are unaware of any similar intergovernmental or interbureaucratic contacts with Poland. This is unfortunate, since the Poles will soon be making important decisions about their public institutions on the basis of very little experience—experience the United States and other Western democracies might share with them. If Americans are rightly proud of their economic success and wish to share its secrets, one wonders why they are reticent about discussing their system of government and habits of public administration, from which the new republics of Central Europe might still have something to learn. □



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HOTCHKISS
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HUNGERFORD
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HUSBAND(S)
HUSSEY
HUTCHE(R)SON
HUTCHIN(S)S
HUTCHI(N)SON
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IDE
INGALL(S)
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INGERSOLL
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ISAAC(S)
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IV(E)Y
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JACKMAN
JACK(S)
JACKSON
JACOB(S)
JACQUES
JA(E)GER
JAMES
JAM(I)(E)SON
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JAY(E)
JEFF(E)RIES
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JEN(C)K(E)S
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M(A)CARTHUR
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MCADAM(S)
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MER(R)IAM
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MESSENGER
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METCALF(E)
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NOYES
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PRESCOTT
PRESTON
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QUISENBERRY
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RADCLIFF(E)
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SALE(S)
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SAMUEL(S)
SANBORN
SANDERSON
SAND(S)
SANFORD
SANGER
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SATTERLEE
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SA(U)NDERS
SAVAGE
SAVIER
SAWYER
SAXON
SAXTON
SAYER(S)
SAYLES
SAYRE
SCALES
SCARB(O)ROUGH
SCARLETT
SCHA(E)F(F)EK
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SUPER SUNDAY

by Benjamin J. Stein

It's one of those mornings when I can't stop my criminal brain from working. I'd like to. I'd like to just walk out the door and wander down the Champs Elysées, going cafe to cabaret. But the wind is roaring through the backyard palm fronds like a locomotive going through Central Jersey. So I'm wired and I have to make a list of all of the genius ideas I've had that night:

• A cable channel which would foment wars in remote parts of the world and cover them around the clock. For example, it might fund the rebels in New Guinea and then fund the government, and watch them kill each other. Let's face it: TV news was never as interesting as during the Vietnam war. Let's go for it again. Simulation is today's game, and we can all play. If a few spear-chucking natives have to die, well, what the heck. They'd probably die from boredom anyway.

• A special free marketeers' sperm bank. It would collect specimens from the surviving Nobel laureates like Friedman and Stigler who have served the cause of laissez-faire. Then, young *madchen* from the Cato Institute and the Heritage Foundation could be inseminated with the precious seed. A whole new generation of ideologues to serve Morgan, Stanley would be created. Maybe Morgan, Stanley would pay for it.

• For me to rent a storefront here in Malibu to dispense advice on any subject. Like Lucy in "Peanuts," I would offer advice on a variety of subjects that any passing surfer might want to talk about: good breaks, the effects of high real interest rates on mergers and acquisitions, how to find a cute girlfriend—anything. I might also give lessons in ordering off a Chinese menu, which I'm pretty good at as well.

• The Richard Nixon Cafe, also here in Malibu. It would overlook the Santa Monica Bay, and would be decorated only with photos and posters celebrating Nixon. His kitchen debate with Khrushchev. His Checkers speech. His walk on the Great Wall of China. There's a lot here. On the stereo, we would have his greatest speeches on C.D.'s, and we would have Mexican Food Day on Thursdays, just the way we did back in the 1973 White House Mess.

• A movie about a 16-year-old boy who is very shy, who gets serious head injuries in a car crash. He's in a coma for months, and then he gets out and starts going to rehab. His mother and father are too busy to drive him there every day. They hire a beautiful out-of-work actress named Scarlet to drive him there. In a way too moving for words, the two of them start to have feelings for each other. In a way that neither of them could possibly have foretold, they have a SAFE SEX romance. Then she goes back to her multi-millionaire investment banker boyfriend, and he goes back to high school. Or maybe vice-versa.

Benjamin J. Stein lives in Malibu.

Enough of that. I attached Trixie, the German Short-Haired Pointer of my dreams, to her red leash with her name on it, and headed down Dume Drive. Past Martin Sheen's house, I saw a house for sale. It was open.

I tied Trixie's leash to the nearest wrought iron fence and strolled in. A pleasant young woman of about nineteen smiled and handed me her real estate card. "Tristan Brando," it read.

"How old are you?" I asked.

"Twenty," she said.

"And you're agenting a million and a half dollar house?"

"Right," she said.

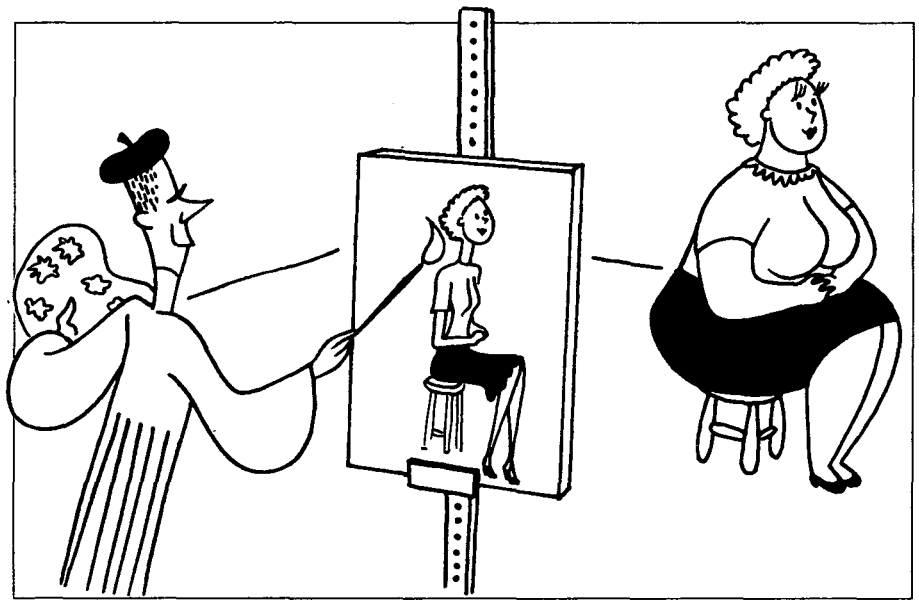
She showed me around the manse. It was laid out as if it had been designed by an architect on angel dust. Tiny rooms not facing the ocean. A huge kitchen with no appliances. A tennis court whose wall blocked the view of the ocean. This is typical of Malibu, where the usual two-million lot has a house designed by a ten-cent mind. At the end of my exclusive street (where I rent, and do not own), a hideous brick house has been built with the perfect Malibu name of "Whale's Waye" (sic). It has huge windows facing its driveway and tiny ones facing the ocean. Go know. Where modern minds meet the eternal sea, there you find "Whale's Waye."

Tristan Brando showed me the guest house next to the tennis court. "I guess your folks were opera buffs, huh? Like *Tristan und Isolde*?" I said.

"Well, not really," Tristan answered. "They were rock 'n' rollers. More like 'Tristan Shout.' "

"You're kidding," I said.

"No. That's the name on my birth certificate, 'Tristan Shout Brando.' No relation to Marlon."



I promised Tristan Shout that I would think seriously about her house. Let's see. One point four million. That comes out to roughly $14,000 per month, or about $168,000 per year. For a freelance crank, that sounds about right.

Just as I was leaving the for-sale house, a gleaming red Ferrari Mondiale came screaming up the driveway. Out of it came a scary looking man in black leather and mirrored sunglasses. With him was none other than Staci, my former assistant, now a successful commercial real estate broker. She still looks beautiful, even though she's worried about reaching the age of twenty-seven.

While her boyfriend, a sort of out and out bunco artist, toured the house with Tristan, I talked to Staci.

"What are you working on?" she asked. "Still writing those long articles about junk bonds?"

"Exactly," I said. "Somehow I just can't get out of my head the fact that these guys made billions selling worthless bonds."

"How is that different from the guy who made so much money selling the Pet Rock a few years ago?" Staci asked.

"Well, it's acknowledged up front that a Pet Rock isn't really much more than a joke. An industrial bond is supposed to have some value somewhat near its cost."

"See, Ben, this is why you just rent out here and don't own anything. Because you insist on making everything so complicated," Staci said. "Just what is a bond supposed to be?"

"More than a Pet Rock," I said.

"Well, to you it is," Staci answered, "but maybe not to Michael Milken. That's why he's rich and you're not."

There's such a thing as being too smart, so I let Staci rejoin her friend and Tristan Brando.

I walked back to my adorable rented house with Trixie. Here's a valuable point to recall about life: I spend a lot of envy thinking how much better other people's houses are than mine.

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But I never think anyone has a better dog than I do. As far as I can recall, the only two creatures that belong to me that seem to be uniquely fine are Trixie and my two-and-a-half-year-old son, Tommy.

Alex, my tall, beautiful wife, and Tommy were still out when I got home so I read through my latest copy of *Malibu Homes and Land*, a sort of catalogue of houses for sale here in our little Malibu. My favorite ad is from someone named Steve Karsh. He's a bearded fellow who month after month advertises the same half-finished house on the land side of Malibu Road, right across from where I used to live. About a year ago, it was for sale for $695,000. It's a year or so later, and the house still hasn't sold. Now it's on the market for $1,195,000.

Here in the Bu, where most houses are incredibly poorly designed, and where most buyers lack the education to understand just what a nice house is anyway, price becomes value. This is a big point. In Litchfield, Connecticut, beauty, architectural grace, and charm all add value, and value becomes price. But here in Southern California, where few can read and everyone can count, the only common denominator that impresses is price.

It doesn't signify to tell a friend that your house is beautiful and was designed by a classy architect. He wouldn't know about beauty and he wouldn't know about architecture. But tell him that the ugliest Tehran lookalike rock pile cost five mill, and he's impressed. Price becomes value.

Back at home a neighbor and his daughter were strolling with their dog, a German Shepherd. (Ever notice how many dogs come from Germany?)

I asked the daughter, a husky type with tattoos on her shoulders, how life was at Mount St. Mary's College.

"It's okay," she shrugged.

"Are you taking any good courses?"

"Yeah, they're okay," she said.

"Do you ever read basic texts like *The Wealth of Nations*?" I asked.

"No," she said, recoiling visibly.

"How about that greatest of all books, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*?"

The young woman looked at me through her steel rims. "You're sick," she said. "You're really sick."

"To expect a college student to read a book?"

"It's not that kind of college," she answered. "It's an art school, and I draw."

"Well, how many years of training have you had for drawing?" I asked.

"Years of training?" she sneered. "I'm doing art, not your yucky business stuff. C'mon, Daddy, let's go."

Her father, a professor of finance at a local university, shrugged and they walked off.

This is another thing I've noticed about Malibu. Many of the women here call themselves artists and paint all day. But none of them has had any art courses. None of them has had any formal training. For that matter, the product of these women usually lacks perspective, proper proportions, or any kind of intelligence in observation. The paintings are like small children's finger painting, only the fingers have big jewels on them.

Alex and Tommy pulled up. Tommy bolted out of his car seat and came running across the front lawn to greet me. "Daddy, Daddy, Daddy," he said, "Go McDonald's."

Alex, his mother, smiled. I asked Tommy if he would not prefer to climb to the top of Point Dume and see the ocean.

"No, Daddy," he said. "Go McDonald's."

At the Malibu McDonald's, there were almost no customers. I think it had something to do with the Super Bowl on TV, but I could be wrong. I ordered for Tommy his Happy Meal and we sat down at a small table next to a black man with his back to me, talking cheerfully to a friend.

"Tommy," I said, "these are your yummy french fries and this is your yummy Diet Coke. Yummy, yummy, yummy."

"Me want ketchup, Daddy," he said.

"All right," I said. "Here's your ketchup."

"Yumm," Tommy said.

"Yumm," I said.

Eddie Murphy turned around and looked at me and at Tommy. "I've seen you on those Western Union commercials," he said. "You're funny."

"I saw you on your first 'Saturday Night Live,' " I said. "You're funny, too. 'Kill My Landlord.' "

"Yeah, that was funny," Eddie Murphy said. "I saw you on Oprah, too, talking about schools. That's a bad problem," he said.

"A huge problem," I agreed. "How do you like your new Mercedes convertible?"

"I like it," he said, gesturing at the $80,000 car in the McDonald's parking lot. "It's okay."

"Some day I'll tell Tommy about this and he won't believe it," I said.

"That's a good looking boy," he said.

"Good luck on *48 Hours, II*," I saluted, and off he went in a very snazzy black leather jacket.

I drove Tommy back to Point Dume. We stopped and I held him up to look at the Ocean Blue. "This is the ocean," I said.

"What's the ocean do?" he asked.

"God made it to be beautiful and to help us live," I said.

"What's God do?" Tommy asked.

"He's our Daddy," I said. "He's everyone's Daddy." I have to admit that I thought this was an almost unimaginably clever beginning for Tommy's spirituality.

I could quite easily visualize Tommy becoming a major spiritual leader, finding his own spiritual peace for the rest of his life, beginning only with that one sage comment. "Yes," I went on, "God is Daddy for all of us."

"Daddy," Tommy said after a thoughtful pause, "God take me McDonald's. Take you, too."

"No," I said. "It's almost dark and you've already been to McDonald's once. It's time to go home." □

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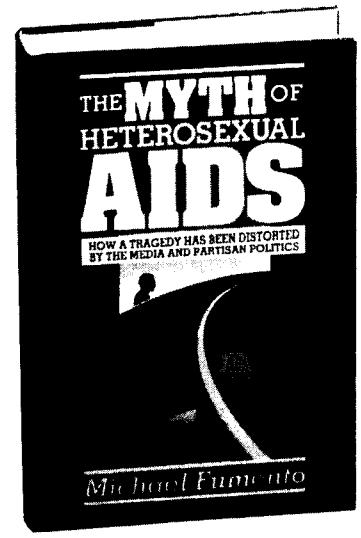

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INVASION OF THE AUTO-NEUTS

by Terry Eastland

"The Watchdog's Bite," a recent magazine article by a journalism professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, has been well thumbed by key figures at ABC News, Gannett, and other leading media organs, and even by some White House officials. Writing in the inaugural (January/February 1990) issue of the *American Enterprise*, Ted J. Smith III addresses "the crisis of confidence" that has afflicted the media in recent years. "It's a different take on the media from any I've seen," a network correspondent told me. Different, indeed. Smith is on to something.

Polls show slippage in public confidence in the press, especially its credibility. Critics routinely explain this as a reaction to media bias. Smith, one of the few conservatives in the journalism wing of academe, agrees with these critics up to a point, but notes there is a deeper problem indicated by polls showing that the public's main complaint isn't political bias but "negativity."

Journalists will often tell you that coverage *must* be negative, that it is inevitable in their work. But why must it be so? Smith finds the answer in the way the media view themselves as society's "watchdog."

As evidence Smith offers a current public-service ad campaign sponsored by the Ad Council and the Society of Professional Journalists (a campaign designed to win back public support). The theme of "Project Watchdog" is, "If the press didn't tell us, who would?" The "right" answer, of course, is no one. And the implication is that without the press our constitutional rights would be in jeopardy. (Not surprisingly, the ad campaign is scheduled to run through 1991, the 200th anniversary of the Bill of Rights.)

Smith notes some useful history: that at the American founding, the press as we know it today did not exist (there were only a handful of newspapers, only one of them a daily, and all of them were highly partisan). That the origins of the modern press lie in the 1830s, with the appearance of mass-circulation dailies. That because they depended on advertising, which depended on circulation, which depended on not alienating potential readers, these dailies became much less partisan as journalists began embracing the ideals of objectivity, balance, and fairness, the point being to report, rather than participate in, the political debate.

In recent decades, of course, the press has come to include broadcast media. But for Smith this is not the only recent change, nor the most important. For it is also in recent decades that the media have made the "watchdog" role their primary one. The idea that the press is the only institution that could "tell us" (whatever awful thing has happened) and thus protect our rights suggests for Smith a "subtle but profound change" in the media's self-understanding. The press, he says, now takes the position of the objective or neutral critic not *of* the society but somehow *outside* and *above* it. It is this stance that has led to the cynical and sometimes apocalyptic negativism that permeates the daily news, especially on network television, and for which the public has less and less taste.

Smith takes issue with this "idealized role" of the press as "an autonomous and neutral critic." One key reason: it is inconsistent with the requirements of an informed electorate. Because the neutral critic dwells on shortcomings, the electorate learns more about what doesn't work than what works, what fails than what succeeds, what is wrong than what is right. Consequently, it is denied the range of information needed to make intelligent decisions. A case in point is economic coverage on evening network newscasts. In *The Vanished Economy*, a study he did for the Media Institute examining such coverage for 1982-1987, Smith found that as the economy improved, the ratio of predominantly negative to positive stories increased from five to one in 1982-83 to seven to one in 1986-87. During the economic expansion that began in November 1982 (and continues still today), broadcast reporters uncovered ever more new problems with the economy while reporting fewer of the increasingly favorable economic statistics.

This kind of coverage obviously influences public perceptions and political agendas. So it turns out that our autonomous, neutral critic is in fact a participant in the discussion. Smith would probably agree that a journalist of this sort is a throwback to the penny-press days of the participant-press, though with this difference: he is not constrained by the obligations of partisanship or governing or anything else (save in the long run, perhaps, by public opinion—hence the ad campaign). Such a reporter is, in Smith's phrase, "omni-principled"—i.e., "free to flit from position to position, adopting and discarding attacks until he finds one that draws blood."

In this way journalists can appear "superior to all other social leaders, especially politicians," says Smith, and this makes them "irresponsible." Journalists "are free to raise unresolvable problems, demand integration of contradictory positions, and enforce standards of conduct that neither they nor anyone else can meet." They constitute a sort of "permanent parliamentary opposition, but without the need to defend a position or offer any reasonable alternatives to the politics it attacks."

Smith argues that the media have taken "a false turn," that their new position as omni-principled critics will damage our society. He observes that the public's increasingly dimmer view of the media may lead to growing public support for restrictions on the power and autonomy of the press. The media can prevent this outcome, he concludes, by restoring the informative role of the press to a position of primacy.

In "The Watchdog's Bite" Ted Smith has successfully explained the negative character of so much media coverage by identifying a type of journalist more and more evident these days: the reporter who "flits" from position to position, who has the luxury of being "irresponsible." My difference is with Smith's use of the term "watchdog" to identify this type. I would prefer a different term, a neologism coined from words Smith uses, "autonomous" and "neutral": auto-neut. The auto-neuts. Not every watchdog is an auto-neut, in my book, and it is the auto-neut that merits attention.

The auto-neut impulse shapes much

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coverage today. Consider, for example, the recent retrospectives on the 1980s, which found little good to say about a decade that witnessed the record U.S.-postwar economic expansion and the worldwide demise of Communism. Or take the Panama coverage, which found plenty of things wrong with the American invasion until, finally, Manuel Noriega gave himself up, at which point it was time to move on to other subject matter.

There are, I think, two kinds of auto-neut genes that have invaded the body media (not to mention other elite bodies, especially academe, which it penetrated first). When I hear a top editor of the *Washington Post* say that he not only refrains from voting but also tries to avoid having opinions on public issues, I hear the voice of the strictest auto-neut, the journalist seemingly attached to nothing at all politically or spiritually. This gene is hostile to commitments of every public kind (and sometimes private ones, too), yet is intensely fascinated by events and actors in the public arena. This gene was well identified, in effect, by David Riesman forty years ago in *The Lonely Crowd*, in his discussion of the inside dopester who refuses "to be taken in by any person, cause, or event." In the Winter issue of *Dissent*, Todd Gitlin, a man of the left, notes that Riesman's inside dopester has evolved into "a harsher, more brittle and cynical type still more knowledgeable in the ways in which things really work, still more purposefully disengaged, still more knowledgeable in a managerial way, allergic to political commitments." In other words, a man in the know but without a chest, to borrow that haunting phrase from C. S. Lewis. It is hard to live this way, but modernism has made it possible, and in the media we find plenty of "savvy spectators," as Gitlin calls them.

Now the other kind of auto-neut gene produces journalists detached not from the world, but from their societies. This kind of journalist is a citizen of the world, a cosmopolite. He stands outside and above society, as Smith says, but let's also specify the society in question: it is *American* society. This particular auto-neut gene is most often seen at work during network coverage of U.S. foreign policy. For example, the eighties saw a dramatic growth in the number of Soviet sources cited during network newscasts, and an even more dramatic growth in the number of speaking appearances by Soviet spokesmen. The spokesmen generally were allowed to rake over the United States, no hard questions asked.

The autonomous, neutral critic thus may appear in one of two guises: either as a citizen of nothing, or a citizen of the world. The editor of this magazine often asks why more conservatives aren't found in the mainstream media. Here's one reason: conservatives prefer to think of themselves as citizens of the United States. They regard themselves as committed to the American enterprise. It is hard to imagine any sensible conservative aspiring to the sensibility of the auto-neut.

Smith's piece raises an important question: the future of American journalism. His call for a more traditional kind of journalism is altogether right. What might help is competition—the emergence of new media organizations committed to informing their readers and listeners accurately and fairly while resisting the "omni-principled" approach of the auto-neut that inevitably leads to negative coverage.

So might more criticism of the media by the media. Smith writes that the press "is the *only* American institution that is *never* subjected to the full inquisitional rigor of investigative journalism." Actually, individual stories and newscasts are sometimes given this treatment. But by and large Smith is right. As the phrase goes, sunlight is the best disinfectant. □

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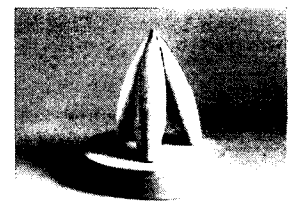

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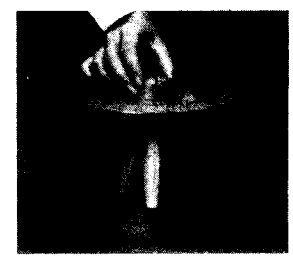

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WHY ARE THEY BEGGING?

by Ernest van den Haag

Lately New Yorkers find many more beggars than they are accustomed to. So do residents of most other cities as far away as San Diego, California, and London, England. They seem to be of all ages and both sexes, but the high proportion of young men stands out because it's unexpected. Why do people beg, and specifically why do so many young people?

Anyone who cannot find a job and earn a living may ultimately be driven to begging. However, unemployment—around five percent of the labor force—is not high by historical standards in New York. More important, "help wanted" signs adorn many places in the city. Employers want busboys, dishwashers, delivery boys, garage mechanics, handymen, salespeople. . . . These are not the greatest jobs. Some of the beggars may have higher qualifications. But, surely, they could work at these jobs, as an alternative to begging. Why don't they?

Some beggars may be unable to work because of physical ailments. This seems not likely, however, to be the case of the many 20- or 30-year-old strong and healthy looking males, who literally shake their begging cups in your face. As for the actual cripples, or those who tell you, particularly on subway trains, of their horrifying diseases, don't we have elaborate and costly social services to take care of such cases? I do know some wholly disabled persons. They are taken care of by social agencies which pay for their medical care and living expenses. These persons do not live luxuriously. But they need not beg, and they do not.

In the nature of the matter some people are likely to fall through the cracks of any welfare system, although our system requires only that need be shown. People in need because of alcoholism or drug addiction are subsidized just as people in need because of any other misfortune. Perhaps the usual bureaucratic barriers are too formidable for some to surmount. Strange as it seems, they may find begging easier. This is certainly the case of people with personality disturbances too mild for institutionalization, yet too pervasive to permit them to overcome bureaucratic hurdles.

Others beg even though they receive help from social agencies. They find it insufficient to support the habits that are part of their personality disturbance, such as drinking or drug taking.

Perhaps we overestimate the increase in begging. Beggars have become ubiquitous, largely because the police, owing to judicial decisions, no longer have the legal means and the will to confine begging to a few areas of town as was done in former times. Thus, like the homeless, beggars have become more visible than before because they can choose where to be. (Incidentally, many of the homeless, although certainly no less poor than the beggars, do not beg. Personality disturbances seem to exist in both groups, but they seem to differ and lead to different behavior.)

Increased visibility may account for some of the apparent increase, but there is little doubt that the number of beggars has actually increased in New York. None of the above considerations seem sufficient to explain the increase. None explain the increase of young and healthy beggars. Indeed, the welfare system, and the high demand for workers, would explain a decrease. Yet, an increase of begging has occurred.

What might explain that increase? I can think of two complementary ideas, both plausible, although speculative: hard evidence is hard to come by. First, begging has always been regarded as acceptable by only a small group of society. The great majority of people would hardly consider it, even as a last resort. It was thought shameful and immoral. Has this moral reluctance been weakened? Today's beggars beg almost defiantly, and seem more intent on stirring guilt feelings than pity. Begging has become a reasonable alternative to other occupations available for making a living. I suspect that more people than in the past feel morally entitled to beg as an inchoate form of protest. Protesting what? That others have what they don't have. Work? It yields little. And some of the beggars may come from welfare families who have always been paid just for being poor, but not paid much. So why not get additional money from those who have it? It would be hard to explain why so many young and healthy persons resort to begging, unless begging is more acceptable to them than working in a menial job.

Secondly, begging has become rewarding enough to be an alternative to employment in low paying jobs. This is so because many people feel that an amount ranging from a quarter to a dollar is worth spending to be rid of a beggar. Perhaps they avoid feelings of guilt for having failed to be charitable; or a loss of prestige in the eyes of their companions. Thus, begging may become profitable and will attract people who prefer it to tedious employment with fixed hours, taxes, and supervisors—and net income below the earnings from begging.

Let me make one observation here for which I have only the most tentative explanations. It seems that beggars do best with those out for a good time in the appropriate areas of the city. Perhaps they give loose change because the good time put them in a generous mood; or, they feel that since they can afford a good time, they should be willing to give at least some crumbs to those who can't. Puzzlingly, beggars seem to make out better with average working Americans than with the rich. Subway riders seem a source of profit, limousine riders less so. Perhaps the greater accessibility of the comparatively poor accounts for this. But it may also be that the average person identifies more with the hard luck story he is being told. The rich, anyway, are less spontaneous; they go in for organized charity. They may be right, too, and help more effectively than does giving a quarter to the

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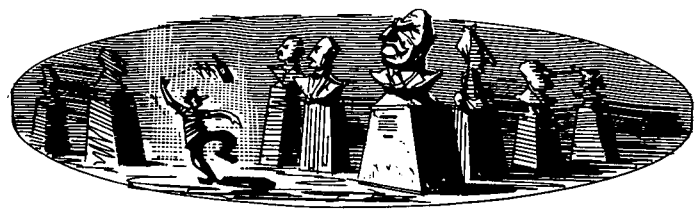
person who tells a hard luck story.

No system can eliminate begging altogether. There always are some people who will resort to it, and some willing to give their change. Indeed, most people would willingly give to people in actual need who have no other resort. Yet, as suggested, people who are disabled and unable to work are provided for by the welfare system. They may not go hungry—although some say they do—but do lack the minor amenities of life. One might wish to help out an elderly beggar. He may be provided for. But why not help him, even if he has enough to eat. It is hard to be old, unable to work, and poor enough to beg.

The problem that must and can be solved is begging by young and able persons. Since employment is available, they beg because they find begging profitable enough to prefer it to the work which, to coin a phrase, goes begging. The quarter we give them discourages them from working and encourages them to go on begging. The remedy, then, and it is the only practical remedy we have, is, with the exception of the old and disabled, to refuse to give anything to beggars. For some this hard course may come hard. But it is socially and morally far better than to take the easy way out, assuage guilt feelings, and encourage parasitic living. We have been paying young people too much for begging. We will have fewer of them begging if we pay less. □

EMINENTOES



SENIOR CITIZENS

by Joe Queenan

Inspired by the success of the fledgling Senior Baseball League, a Florida real estate developer has launched a Senior House of Representatives based in Pompano Beach, Florida.

"So far, Jim Wright, Tip O'Neill, Tony Coelho, and John Jenrette have all committed to a 16-week legislative season," beams Kirby Moffett, the wealthy condominium developer who came up with the novel idea for a roving legislative ensemble. "The Congress will travel around to eighteen different shopping malls in southern Florida and stage lifelike debates on all the pivotal legislative issues of our time: abortion, disarmament, airline de-regulation, sex with congressional pages. We have every expectation that it will be a huge boost to tourism."

Moffett, who charges a $3.99 admission to each congressional session, concedes that salaries are nothing like those the legends of American politics used to haul down while they were on Capitol Hill; down in the Grapefruit League pay starts at $400 a week, plus motel lodging (shared double beds), and an $18 per diem for meals. But none of the senior congressmen seem to be complaining.

"Much as I enjoyed being in the House of Representatives, I never had any real fun up there," laughs recently deposed House Speaker Jim Wright. "This here Senior Circuit gives me a chance to crack jokes, slap fannies, even squish a few cream pies in Republican faces. I think it's going to be a hoot."

The thirty-two ex-congressmen who make up the Senior Congress are a rich and varied lot, ranging from retired but cash-strapped legends such as O'Neill to disgraced figures such as Pat Swindall, the convicted Georgia congressman who has been granted weekend passes from federal prison to participate in the ersatz House's bogus deliberations. Moffett also has high hopes that convicted jail-bait aficionado Buz Lukens may join the group should Ohio voters chuck him out of office in the next congressional election. "It would sure bring out the teenyboppers," chuckles Moffett.

The ex-congressmen travel around the state in two oversized mobile homes, plus a ferry—the Houseboat—that plies its way through the swampier regions of the interior. "We hit backwaters of the Okefenokee where people have never even heard of the House of Representatives," notes Coelho, who resigned from Congress last spring, amidst allegations of fiscal improprieties involving Drexel Burnham Lambert. "It's a real civics lesson for these yahoos."

Wherever the Senior House has appeared so far, the ex-politicians have been vastly outnumbered by an ancillary group of Senior Lobbyists, Senior Pundits, and Senior Legislative Assistants. Senior Girlfriends have also been spotted, but Moffett denies that any are on the payroll.

Though most members of the Senior Congress are seasoned warriors whose political careers are clearly over, more than a handful admit that they are wandering around the wilds of semi-rural Florida in the hopes of getting their careers back on track.

"I can still filibuster, I can still pork barrel, and I can still pin hopelessly inappropriate legislation onto omnibus bills with the best of them," says Wright. "I still think I can cut it in the bigs."

Moffett says that if the Senior House, whose deliberations will be carried live on CNN starting in March, is a success, he may consider adding a Senior Senate, a Senior Supreme Court, a Senior Department of Transportation, and even a Senior White House sometime next summer.

"Reagan wants big bucks—you know, that Japan thing—and Nixon's still pouting," says the good-natured Moffett. "But Ford got shortchanged on his term, only serving those two years, so he'll do it for lunch money plus a guarantee of a couple of good tee times. And Carter, well, we know we can get Jimmy cheap." □

Joe Queenan is a frequent contributor to Barron's *and other publications.*

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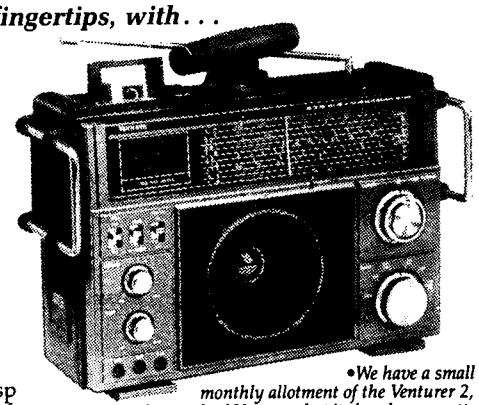

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THE TALKIES

BLACK AND WHITE IN COLOR

by Bruce Bawer

For weeks now, a movie theater near my home has been playing *Glory*, the much-lauded movie about the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, the first black regiment in the Civil War. The movie is doing very good business there, and much of the credit should doubtless go to the New York City Board of Education: for whenever I walk by that theater at noon or thereabouts on a weekday, I find myself in a crowd of high school students, mostly black, who are waiting to see the picture. Yep, you heard right: at a time when American schools—especially those in the inner cities—are graduating kids who can't read, write, or find the United States on a map, teachers (in New York City, at least) are hauling their classes to the movies during school hours.

Presumably, the idea behind these midday movie-theater trips is to use *Glory* as an educational tool—to make history come alive for students, and to give the black kids pride in their heritage. There's nothing wrong with these goals, I suppose, although (a) making history come alive for kids is hardly of any use if they don't also learn the *facts* of history and come to understand them, and (b) pride in something over which one has no control—whether it's one's sex, race, ethnic background, or national origin—seems to me a less meaningful commodity than it's sometimes cracked up to be.

Or maybe New York's high school teachers have been reading Hendrik Hertzberg, who in a recent issue of the *New Republic* wrote passionately about the experience of seeing *Glory* in "the cozy screening room of the Motion Picture Association of America." Hertzberg came away convinced that *Glory*, by illustrating "that the Civil War was a revolutionary war, that black soldiers were freedom fighters in that war, and that they were all the more heroic because they not only fought but had to fight to fight . . . could do more to alleviate the alienation of young blacks from the 'mainstream' than any amount of . . . curricular victimology."

The other day, in an attempt to test Hertzberg's theory, I went to see *Glory* at a little past noon on a weekday. It was not an affair to warm a Hertzberg's heart. When Trip (Denzel Washington), a truculent ex-slave, began to deliver the movie's obligatory and improbable Big Speech, in which he expressed a prescient skepticism about postbellum race relations and proclaimed stirringly that he was fighting not for the white man's Union but for himself, the high school kids who were seated all around me grew bored and rambunctious, and jabbered noisily among themselves. When Trip tormented his fellow soldier Thomas (André Braugher), an intelligent, Emerson-reading Bostonian, the kids hooted delightedly, showing no empathy whatsoever for Thomas's poignant, acutely ironic position as a privileged member of society who has relinquished his cherished freedom only to find himself in the company of fellow blacks who seem thoroughly alien to him. And the kids laughed, too, when the seemingly hard-hearted Trip stood up, on the eve of battle, and, choking back tears, told his fellow soldiers that he loved them.

The only portions of the movie that drew as enthusiastic a response as the pre-movie soft-drink commercial—in which an eminent basketball player leaped up and, to the cheers and applause of the entire audience, slam-dunked a six-pack of Coke into a tree-house—were the hideously graphic battle sequences. The kids savored these episodes: they relished every thrust of a bayonet, every bullet in a chest, every exploding shell, every flying limb. It didn't seem to matter to them who was being sliced and diced, or for what cause, so long as there was a generous display of blood and guts. Plainly, they hadn't enjoyed anything so much since *Rambo*. (To be sure, there were demurrers. When the movie ended, a girl sitting near me shook her head at all the carnage. "I *hate* this kind of movie!" she declared.)

If I've gone on so extensively about the audience reaction to *Glory*, it's because this film has been acclaimed—not only by Hertzberg, but by many well-meaning white liberals—for something other than its artistic or entertainment value; they've celebrated it largely because, like Hertzberg, they figure it must be inspiring to blacks, especially to disaffected young members of the "underclass." But popular culture is not going to save these kids. On the contrary, it's part of the problem: these kids' lives, as a rule, are already tragically circumscribed by rap music and slasher movies and MTV, by aggressive sounds and images with little or no thought content. Far from making them think, a movie like *Glory*, with all its grisly combat sequences, is experienced by them as simply one more raucous, belligerent, visceral event.

This is not to say that *Glory* is without merit. It *is* true, however, that the only surprising thing about this film is how thoroughly unsurprising it is: the characters, the conflicts, the big scenes are all exactly what you'd expect. In addition to Washington's Angry Young Slave and Braugher's Genteel Negro, the 54th contains one Wise Old Trooper (Morgan Freeman) and one Good-Natured Innocent (Jihmi Kennedy). The 24-year-old leader of the regiment, Colonel Robert Gould Shaw (Matthew Broderick), whose parents are long-time abolitionists, is uncomplicatedly earnest and upstanding—a regular little Eagle Scout—and the obstacles he has to overcome are predictable: the jeers of white soldiers (which, of course, turn into cheers by film's end), the unwillingness of a narrow-minded supply officer to provide his men with shoes, the disinclination of the War Department to send black troops into battle.

There is, moreover, an oddly mechanical, low-voltage quality to the way the film's writer, Kevin Jarre, and its director, Edward Zwick, set up and resolve these conflicts. Indeed, if it weren't for the wonderfully staged and highly charged battle sequences, one might confuse *Glory* with one of those solemn, plodding biographical dramas, with titles like "Galileo: A Man and His Telescope," that you run across now and then on educational TV. Certainly the film's worst failing is that Shaw—thanks, largely, to Broderick's lack of range, presence, and moral weight—never grows as a character; and the film itself, excessively mindful of its Good Intentions, too often shares his empty earnestness.

The film's other major roles, by contrast, are remarkably well served by

Bruce Bawer is The American Spectator*'s movie reviewer.*

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the performers. Schematically routine though their parts may be, Washington, Braugher, Kennedy, and (especially) Freeman all turn in riveting, beautifully shaped performances, lending depth and nuance to characters that might easily have been rendered as caricatures. And Freddie Francis's cinematography makes striking use of light and mist and shadow without being either too overpowering or inappropriately pretty. (The camerawork often reminds one of Francis's equally impressive work in *The French Lieutenant's Woman.*) Just one question: Why is this movie called *Glory*? The whole point, I should think, is that these soldiers are *not* fighting for glory; they're fighting for a cause.

• • •

Driving Miss Daisy, the Oscar-nominated film which has been adapted by Alfred Uhry from his play and directed by Bruce Beresford, is as gentle as *Glory* is brutal. The story couldn't be simpler: it's the late 1940s in Atlanta, and a feisty, seventyish Jewish widow, Mrs. Daisy Werthan (Jessica Tandy), has reached the point at which she can't drive anymore. Over her objections, her son Boolie (Dan Aykroyd), who runs the lucrative family cotton mills, hires her a wise, easy-going black chauffeur named Hoke Colburn (Morgan Freeman). Miss Daisy resents Hoke, and for a while refuses to get in the car with him; when she finally does relent, she nags him mercilessly about his driving. Gradually, however, she comes to like and respect him, and to rely upon his companionship; and over the years (for Miss Daisy and Hoke stay together for a quarter of a century) a genuine affection develops between them.

And that's pretty much it. There are no surprises, no sensational turning points, no grand sentimental scenes: along with Beresford's *Tender Mercies* (1982), this has got to be one of the most spare, understated movies ever made. Like *Tender Mercies*, however, *Driving Miss Daisy* is miraculously affecting—and I *mean* miraculously; for though it moves modestly and unhurriedly from episode to episode, taking care that every word and gesture comes across as utterly natural and unmagnified, it packs an unprepared-for punch at the end that does seem rather magical. It's a textbook demonstration of the fact that, even in the most notoriously immoderate of all genres, less *can* be more, and that—given an honest, humane, and intelligent script, a company of dexterous and discerning actors, and a sensitive, compassionate director with a first-rate eye for illuminating detail—a film's paucity of incident can be more than compensated for by a credible and captivating richness of character.

And what unforgettable characters they are. Tandy brings to her performance as Miss Daisy the same capacity for tight-lipped toughness that, forty-five years ago, made her such a magnificently shrewish spouse to the long-suffering Gregory Peck in *The Valley of Decision*. But Miss Daisy is no shrew. She is, rather, an outsider in her society, a thoroughgoing Southern lady who nonetheless, simply because she's Jewish, will never seem *completely* Southern to her fellow born-and-bred Atlantans; she's also a rich woman who can't ever forget that she was born poor. This is not to say that she is ashamed of her erstwhile poverty, or that she—like Florine, her snobbish, social-climbing Georgia-JAP daughter-in-law—tries to hide her Jewishness. Far from it. But her exotic status *has* made her vigilant and wary and distrustful; she's on guard in a way that the good-natured Boolie, who was born into wealth, is not. If she's grown a tough hide, it's because she's felt a need for it.

Hoke has strength, too. And he has pride—*real* pride, the sort that's grounded in a quiet and amply justified sense of self-worth, that makes moral distinctions but doesn't lash out at each perceived slight, that's able to recognize and forgive human frailties for what they are. (This is true, too, of Rawlins, Freeman's otherwise very different character in *Glory*.) Hoke is also blessed with a marvelous sense of humor; he laughs readily, finding amusement where he can, laughing less at Miss Daisy, per se, than at the ironies and absurdities of life itself. If toughness is Miss Daisy's weapon against the pain of exclusion, laughter is his.

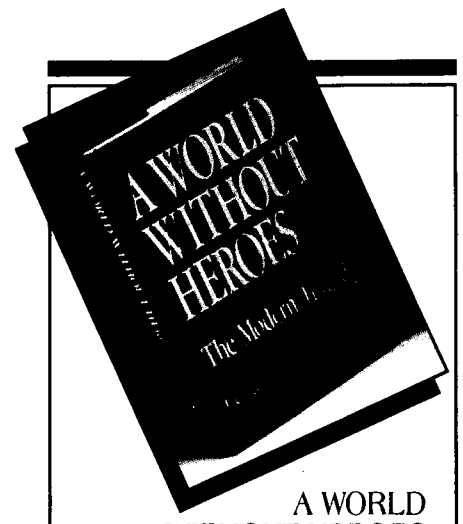
Both Tandy and Freeman are splendid actors—but we already knew that. The eye-opener here is Dan Aykroyd. Having floundered, in recent years, in one insipid comedy after another, the sometime Blues Brother proves himself here to be a very fine light character actor in the Jack Carson mold; he suits the film perfectly. So, for that matter, do Hans Zimmer's jaunty, good-natured score and Peter James's radiant photography. And the exemplary costumes and art direction do a phenomenal job of making one feel as if this *is* pre-Peachtree Center Atlanta.

Two small criticisms. First, the movie's focus tilts toward Miss Daisy—and reasonably so, since Hoke is the constant here, and she's the variable. But one does wish one knew as much about Hoke as about her. (It comes as something of a surprise, toward the end, when he turns out to have a granddaughter.) Second, there's a short scene, about midway through the film, whose implications are unfortunate. During an excursion to Mobile in the 1950s, Hoke and Miss Daisy pull over for lunch, and are confronted by two patrolmen who demand to see their papers. Asked what kind of a name Werthan is, Miss Daisy explains that it's of German extraction. The car drives off, and one lawman quips: "An old nigger and an old Jew woman taking off down the road together—that is one sorry sight."

Bigot or not, would an Alabama highway cop really have said such a thing? Would he have pegged Miss Daisy as a Jew? And, if so, would he have considered the spectacle of her, Hoke, and their huge, shiny car a "sorry sight"? It seems unlikely. (If anything, he'd be envious.) What's truly dismaying about this scene, though, is that since these two cops are the most prominent gentile Caucasians in the movie, their encounter with Miss Daisy and Hoke appears to imply that affluent Jews are black people's natural allies against ignorant, less well-to-do white Protestant Southerners; and this implication, to my mind, is unfair to the many white Protestant Southerners who, despite their often deeply ingrained notion that political equality for blacks would represent a threat to their own precarious socioeconomic position, have helped in the last few decades to make the South (in the eyes of many observers) a less racially polarized place than, say, New York City.

But the highway episode runs counter to everything else in *Driving Miss Daisy*. For one of the most commendable things about the film is that, its concern with race relations notwithstanding, it recognizes that where the ethical constitution of ordinary people is concerned, nothing is (if you'll excuse the expression) black and white. When it comes to the question of race, the characters contradict and deceive themselves just as in real life. Take the Martin Luther King dinner sequence. In 1966, King comes to Atlanta to speak at a gala fund-raising dinner to which Boolie and Miss Daisy have purchased tickets. Though Boolie claims to admire King, he decides not to attend because he's worried how his fellow businessmen will react; Miss Daisy, also a declared King fan, chides Boolie for not going, but balks at his sincere proposal (hardly that of a redneck!) that she take Hoke as her escort; she finally mentions the suggestion to Hoke when the two of them are in her car, headed for the dinner, and does so in an oblique, unintentionally insulting way, provoking a rare outburst of indignation on the part of Hoke, who would clearly like to have been asked. The unpleasantness is never resolved. A less intelligent movie would've ended the sequence with all three of them—Miss Daisy, Boolie, and Hoke— at the King dinner, basking in their bold and righteous interracial solidarity, challenging all Atlanta to reproach them. Uhry and Beresford prefer, sensibly, to keep the characters believable—human, not saintly.

Indeed, while the gradually shifting tone of the relationship between Miss



A WORLD WITHOUT HEROES
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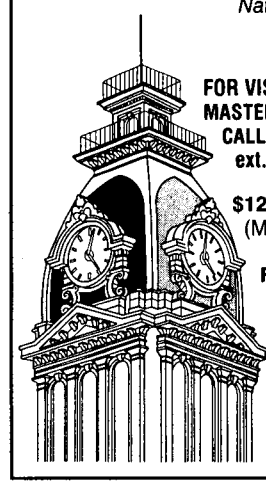

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Daisy and Hoke can be seen as a metaphor for the developing relations between the races in the South from the forties to the seventies, the filmmakers don't press this interpretation upon us. They're smart enough to recognize that the value of *Driving Miss Daisy* lies in its particularity, in the precision with which it attends to the lives and personalities of these two individuals. It's an unapologetically "small" story, the sort that is often swallowed up helplessly on the big screen—and the ultimate testament to its power is that it fills the screen at every moment. In a time of war and space epics, of super heroes and big-budget special effects, it's nice to be able to say that the most profoundly satisfying movie in a long, long while is a quiet, unpretentious story about people and what they can mean to each other—a film about the brief, luminous moments that add up to a life. □

THE GREAT AMERICAN SALOON SERIES

THE RUSSIAN TEA ROOM

by Richard Brookhiser

I wonder how many people learned that Russians drink tea out of glasses the same way that I did, from the Signet Classic edition of *The Death of Ivan Ilych and Other Stories*? (The price on the cover of my copy is 95 cents, so I learned it a long while ago.) Ten pages into "The Kreutzer Sonata," the narrator and the man who killed his wife are settling into a long train ride side by side, and the killer offers the narrator some tea. "The tea was really like beer," I read, "but I drank a glass of it.*" At the foot of the page, the helpful mate of the asterisk explains: "*Tea in Russia is usually drunk out of tumblers."

Tea at the Russian Tea Room is drunk out of tumblers too. If it isn't made in samovars (another discovery of my high school reading) it's not for lack of equipment, for there are several dozen samovars filling strategic shelves on the restaurant's walls.

The Russian Tea Room is on 57th Street in Manhattan, just east of Carnegie Hall. "Slightly to the left of Carnegie Hall," was how their cutesy radio ads used to put it. Has that changed, in the Age of Gorbachev? If the Baltic states are allowed to secede, will the restaurant hop over the concert hall to the other side?

It sits in a townhouse, scrunched by larger neighbors. Inside the door, the general impression is one of great depth, as in a sumptuous bowling alley. The pecking order of tables seems to be: tables in the middle of the floor, lowest; banquette seats along the wall, next; curved booths along the wall, success in New York. I've never succeeded yet. The waiters, even the obvious Hispanics, all wear blouses which are meant to suggest Cossacks; the paintings on the walls, which hang wherever the management forgot to put a samovar, are supposed to suggest the stuff the Hermitage sent over from its post-Impressionist collection.

I wonder what a Russian would think of the place. In my experience, East European émigrés are extraordinarily bristly when it comes to any topic having to do with their homelands. American ignorance upsets them the least; sometimes, they even take it with good grace. An American with an opinion is a different matter; unless it coincides exactly with the émigré's, the social barometer drops ominously. If the contrary point of view belongs to a fellow émigré, expect tornadoes and hail. This kind of thing pops up all the time in Nabokov: the Komarovs (a professor and his wife in *Pnin*) "would throw Russki parties every now and then, with Russki hors d'oeuvres and guitar music and more or less phony folk songs—occasions at which shy graduate students would be taught vodka-drinking rites and other stale Russianisms. . . . Only another Russian could understand the reactionary and Sovietophile blend presented by the pseudo-colorful Komarovs . . . " Sorry I asked. "Only another Russian" is a mistake, though. Nabokov should have written, "Only *one* other Russian." Some other Russian would have a slightly different fight to pick with them.

So no Russian has to come here. The reason you've come here, alcoholically speaking, is vodka. We encountered vodka once before, at the Paradise in Brighton Beach (*TAS*, December 1988). That was a legitimate form of it: sheer alcohol, honest and efficient as a lube job. The Russian Tea Room takes a more differentiated approach, for there is actually a vodka menu. You can order vodka from a dozen lands, as unlikely as Ireland and Israel. Be smart, and order one from Russia or Finland. The glass it comes in arrives nestled in its own bowl of ice, looking like some sort of science experiment (cold fusion?). You can also order a number of vodka drinks with Russki names. My favorite is the Pavlova, a creamy concoction which is the color of the thighs of the corps de ballet, and which tastes like mother's milk, but isn't.

You can eat well here too, but be warned—you won't have to eat again for a week. The chicken Kiev (the menu calls it by its Frenchy name, *côtelette de Kiev*) is very nice, but when your waiter slices it open for you, the butter flows like the Dnieper.

There is something Christmasy about the place, which makes it always delightful to visit, but which can also be a bit of a shock when you come in off 57th Street in August. Partly it's the color scheme: the walls, what you can see of them between paintings and samovars, are a deep, piny green. Partly it's because the management leaves ornaments on the chandeliers all year round. The samovars look like ornaments too—some big as diver's helmets, some small as traveling hair dryers, all metal and all gleaming so brightly it looks as if the spigots were winking at you.

But all the decorations in the world wouldn't give the place a holiday air if the food and drink weren't copious, with that festive abandon that a Westerner, anyway, associates with Russian dining.

The following story is hearsay, but I had no reason to doubt the teller. He was an elderly Englishman who claimed to have heard it from a schoolmate of his, a young Russian émigré from a once-wealthy family. The family had been vacationing some place in the south of Russia—perhaps Yalta. Vacation over, they headed back to St. Petersburg. Along the way, one of the servants in the entourage remarked that the area through which they were passing rang a bell of some kind: didn't they own an estate in the neighborhood? No one seemed to know, but they asked around until, sure enough, they found a property, unvisited for years. The retainers who had been maintaining it, as surprised as the travelers, opened it up, and the family rested from its journey. A plate full of butter is several orders of magnitude less extravagant than an extra house, but both, it seems to me, convey the same spirit.

The trouble with deciding how "real" the copiousness of a place like the Russian Tea Room is arises from the fact that everything in it has been plucked out of time, and preserved wholesale. But time, when it has a chance to unfold naturally, selects and winnows. America, to consider our own past, went through a period known as "the twenties." Sixty years later, only certain things from the twenties have survived—Bix Beiderbecke, not Paul Whiteman; F. Scott Fitzgerald, not James Branch Cabell. Nostalgia short-circuits the picking and choosing of time by preserving everything, down to the salt shakers. Exile is enforced nostalgia, comprehensiveness imposed by history. Nabokov, if you calmed him down, would have understood.

That's a lot of weight to put on a restaurant, especially when the fare is so substantial to begin with. We don't know what will become of the Soviet Union. It may break back into time, and become Russia once more. If it does, it will find some good drink recipes waiting for it left of Carnegie Hall. □

Richard Brookhiser is a senior editor of National Review *and a columnist for the* New York Observer.

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PRESIDENT BUSH MEETS THE WASHINGTON CLUB

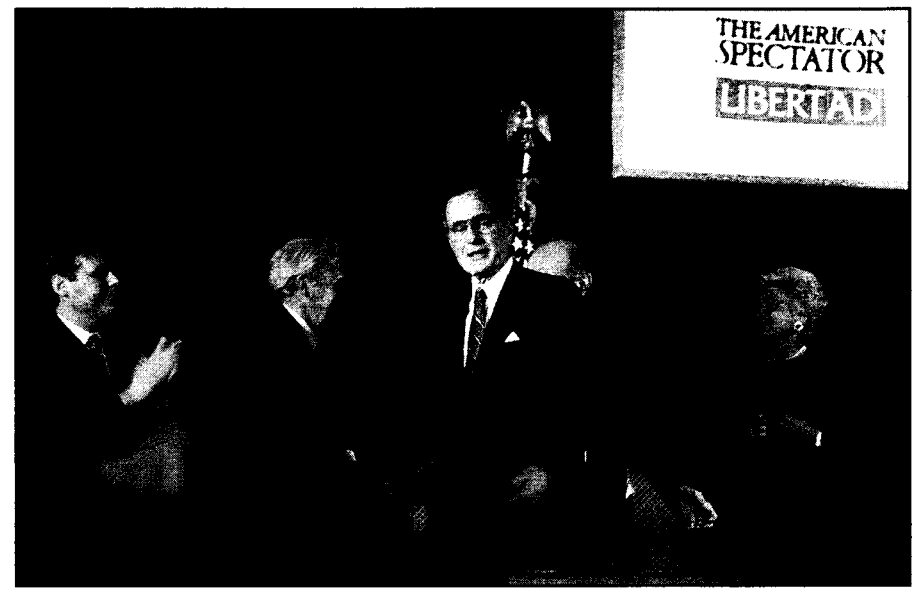
In 1967, *The American Spectator* (then known as the *Alternative*) was founded by graduate student R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., to challenge the liberal orthodoxy dominating Indiana University. When Tyrrell turned the magazine into a national publication four years later, he did so fully aware that intellectual reviews have never made a profit in America and, in fact, are dependent on financial benefactors who understand the importance of such magazines in the battle of ideas. Thanks to the generosity of numerous concerned individuals, listed here, *The American Spectator* makes its mark in cultural and political affairs. To celebrate the commitment of its financial backers, *The American Spectator* has annual dinners at which members of The American Spectator Advisory Group (donors of $10,000 or more) and The American Spectator Washington Club (donors of $1,000 or more) come together with *TAS* editors, writers, and related notables to discuss the magazine's high ideals and to celebrate.

This year's dinner was held January 22 at the Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C. Among the 260 guests were *Spectator* staffers, writers, and financial supporters; as well as congressmen, journalists, representatives from Libertad (the international, pro-liberty organization co-sponsoring the dinner), and honored guest President George H. W. Bush. It was Mr. Bush's second appearance as featured speaker. In November 1987, then Vice President Bush addressed the *Spectator*'s first annual gathering—at a time when the local pundits were saying he would not survive the 1988 presidential primaries. Now, of course, only "Doonesbury" takes that position.

Libertad Chairman (and Nobel laureate) David Morse, on introducing President Bush, warned of the hazards society invites when it ignores the gradual erosion of liberty. The President based his talk on the unfortunate modern tendency to exaggerate the meaning of surface appearances, at the expense of reality (see excerpt from talk on next page). Editor-in-Chief R. Emmett Tyrrell later amplified this idea by training his remarks on the scribes and pundits who shout inanities into the "vast, transcontinental echo chamber" that is mainstream media today.

The two other speakers at the podium that evening were Ambassador Frank Shakespeare and *TAS* Publisher Ronald E. Burr. Shakespeare pondered the almost exclusively American phenomenon of the influence commanded by "small circulation, intellectual opinion magazines." Ron Burr recapped the success of the *Spectator*'s ongoing programs, including training young writers for eventual positions in our nation's "one-party media." Ron also noted that Washington Club membership increased by 25 percent in 1989. (To enter membership in the Washington Club or Advisory Group, please call Ron Burr at *TAS*, or use the coupon on page 39.)

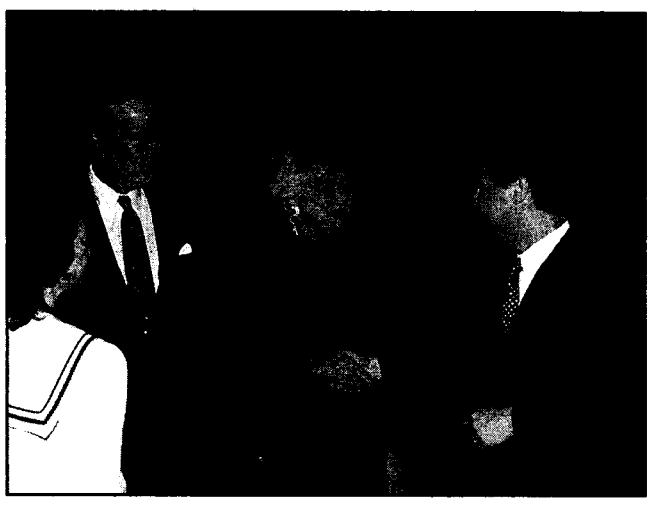
The evening concluded with dancing to swing jazz encouraged by three open bars. The *Washington Post* wrote up the event the following morning, concluding with the opinion of reporter Martha Sherrill that the *Spectator*'s annual dinner was not as much "fun" as the parties her liberal friends host. Okay, next year the press drinks for free like everyone else.



Ambassador Frank Shakespeare welcomes the President to the dais.

James "Doc" Griffitts supplies yet more "Enemies List" names to P. J. O'Rourke, while R. Emmett Tyrrell cheers his every nomination.

John M. Olin Foundation Executive Director James Piereson, R. Emmett Tyrrell, and Lord Henry Plumb.


My Hanh Burr and Publisher Ronald E. Burr greet President and Mrs. Bush.

President Bush re-creates the Laffer Curve for Heather Richardson.

Libertad's Andrew Whist and Chairman David Morse converse, while Republican National Committee Chairman Lee Atwater sweeps the room for Democrats.

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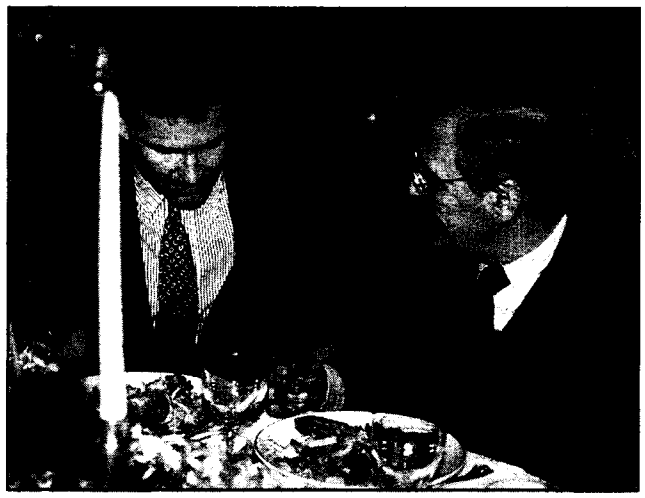
President Bush remarks on the nation's abundance of Current Wisdom.

Excerpt From President Bush's Speech

"I understand that this is actually *The American Spectator*'s 1989 annual dinner. Now that's true conservatism, you see. Wait until the year's over—completely over—until you decide whether its worth celebrating . . .

"I am delighted to be here, and so is Barbara, to help celebrate tonight with all of you. Our nation's intellectual life would be more than a little poorer without *The American Spectator* surveying the scene. Your critical eye helps us see beneath the surface—see beneath and beyond the intellectual fads and fashions of the day—to the ideas and enduring values that really matter in our society."

—President George Bush



R. Emmett Tyrrell solicits advice from business writer Irwin Stelzer.

White House Chief of Staff John Sununu and Heather Richardson.

R. Emmett and Miss Anne Tyrrell answer the band's call to action.

Wladyslaw Pleszczynski and Geraldine Novak discuss Maryland basketball.

TAS Circulation Manager Vanessa Bergh, Copy Editor Troy Gately, and Production Manager Denise Ferguson about to rush back to the office.

Joanna Pleszczynska, Robert Novak, and National Endowment for the Humanities Chairman Lynne Cheney.

Wallace F. Rollins, photographer

Illia Barger, Roving Correspondent Micah Morrison, Advertising Manager John Funk, and Linda Avery. (John and Linda honeymooned in Colorado two weeks after the dinner, while Micah headed for Montana for more research on the Yellowstone fires.)

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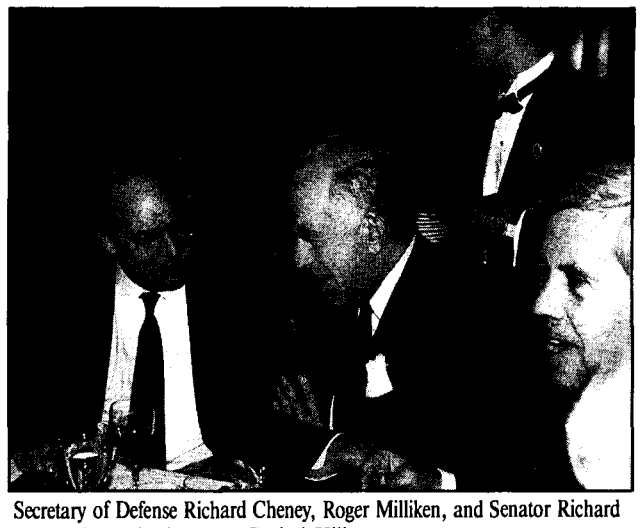
Deborah Jennings, Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, and Phillip Jennings.

Reader's Digest Washington Editor Bill Schulz (far left) and Vice President Quayle's Chief of Staff William Kristol (far right) provide commentators Fred Barnes and Robert Novak with inside information.



Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, Roger Milliken, and Senator Richard Lugar discuss business on Capitol Hill.

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE SUN ALSO SETS: THE LIMITS TO JAPAN'S ECONOMIC POWER
Bill Emmott/Times Books-Random House/292 pp. $19.95

THE END OF THE AMERICAN CENTURY
Steven Schlossstein/Congdon & Weed/537 pp. $22.95

David Brock

Both Japan-bashers and Japan-apologists agree that Japan's economic rise is unremitting and irreversible. Though the Soviet Union proves there is no certain connection between capital exports and great power status, the received wisdom deigns it simply a matter of time before Japan exploits its economic clout through the projection of political and military power. Bill Emmott, formerly the *Economist*'s correspondent in Tokyo, dispassionately rejects this view, arguing that neither a Pax Nipponica, a Pacific Century, a Yen Bloc, nor even a mighty Japan Inc. is on the horizon.

In *The Sun Also Sets*, Emmott argues that Japan's muscle lies in its current-account surplus (capital and trade); in 1987, the current-account surplus of $87 billion was nearly nineteen times the 1981 figure, the result of high personal savings, low consumption, a small government deficit, and declining corporate borrowing. Jitters about Japan's consequent foreign investment binge stem from an extrapolation from the current rate of growth of capital exports, and this in turn is predicated on Japan remaining a saving and producing nation. But suppose social and economic trends are heading in the reverse direction and the surplus begins to shrink? This is the provocative case Emmott makes: the very factors that characterized Japan's rise have changed under the influence of the rise and soon will bring on decline.

The trade component of the current-account surplus is already falling. From 1981 to 1985, growth was driven by exports. But since 1987, Japan has experienced a consumer boom with imports rising. Emmott points out that Japan's exports as a percentage of GNP are lower than those of France, West Germany, Britain, and Holland. The problem has never been that Japan exports too much, but that it exports more than it needs to pay for its imports. He believes this imbalance will continue to be righted: the Japanese are responding to low prices by buying more imports. Any casual observer can see the craze for Louis Vuitton and McDonald's. Televisions and other medium-tech goods imported from Taiwan and Korea are selling briskly at 40 percent less than made-in-Japan goods. What is more, even before the dollar fell against the yen, the 300 largest U.S.-owned firms in Japan had locally produced sales of $43.9 billion in 1984, a product penetration virtually that of Japanese firms in the U.S.

Protectionist policies and cultural bugaboos have thwarted food imports to Japan, but Emmott reports that import controls, guaranteed prices, and official handling of food distribution are being phased out as consensus gels that lower food prices boost growth. The farm lobby is losing power: in 1987, Japan cut the price of rice by six percent, the first cut in the producer price in forty years. Consumer preferences are shifting: the Japanese are eating 40 percent less rice today than thirty years ago, and more (imported) protein and wheat. A second problem has been selling to commercial firms that are loathe to use foreign suppliers. Yet the yen's rise has sent manufacturers abroad looking for cheaper suppliers of parts and components. In 1988, more than half of Japan's imports were manufactures, up from a third three years earlier.

As to the savings portion of the surplus, Emmott maintains that youth has been the decisive factor. Labor costs have been low and little has been paid out in pension or social security benefits. By 2020, 23.5 percent of the population will be over sixty-five, and living longer, up from 12 percent in 1990; the flip side is a falling birth rate. Not only do the elderly not save, they are a drain on savings. Younger workers will be paying more of their weekly checks to social security. At the same time, the perceived reliability of the pension system is causing the personal savings rate to fall. The ratio of savings to disposable income was 23 percent in 1975; by 1985, it had fallen to 16 percent, lower than Taiwan's and Italy's.

What matters, though, is not so much the absolute supply of savings as the balance between the supply of savings and the domestic demand for them. During the 1980s, the government cut its deficit to almost zero, borrowing and investing fewer savings each year. Companies' capital investments also fell. But the government since 1986 has been expanding public works spending to stoke growth, and companies are increasing sharply their domestic fixed investments in response to the high yen. As savings slip and demand steps up, Japan, in need of capital, will run a deficit on the current-account of its balance of payments. This closes the circle: once Japan loses its role as a net creditor to the world, it loses its leverage.

That, in shorthand form, is Emmott's forecast. Underlying Emmott's thesis is an analysis of Japanese culture that refutes the so-called revisionist school, which endorses the very notions of Japanese exceptionalism advanced by the ruling mandarins the revisionists think they are rebutting. "The Japanese are not a breed apart," Emmott writes. The neomercantilist fortress is crumbling under modern pressures not unlike, though far more attenuated than, those that brought down the Berlin Wall; the country is moving in the direction of "more competition, more freedom, more choice." The surplus of capital that stayed at home in the 1980s altered the shape of financial markets by spurring deregulation, creating new markets, and denying bureaucrats control over economic life. The Ministry of Industry and Trade Information, the reputed mastermind of the "Japanese miracle," has relinquished its role as policy-maker to become merely an information-broker. Neither does Emmott subscribe to the "invincible Japan" model advanced by the Harvard Japanophiles Ezra Vogel and Edwin O. Reischauer. They portray the Japanese as frugal, but Emmott thinks they're the ultimate consumerists. Japan's "workaholics" put in long hours to collect overtime or because of peer pressure, but they do no more work in ten hours than others do in seven or eight. The work force is increasingly mobile and entrepreneurial, with only one-third enjoying "lifetime employment."

The book would have been enhanced by a discussion of the political fallout from the Recruit scandal, which has loosened the Liberal Democratic party's stranglehold. Without that, the discussion here of Japanese politics makes

David Brock is a senior editor of Insight *magazine.*

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more equivocal the cultural and economic prognostications. "The way power operates in Japan tends to make it inward-looking, ensuring that international affairs are neglected in favor of purely domestic interests," the author writes. "It instills and preserves a protectionist instinct. Prime ministers rise from the shifting sands of factional politics, not from any popular vote or mandate." But in answer to Dutch journalist Karel van Wolferen's much-touted argument that the "system" is incapable of meaningful reform, Emmott writes that Japan responds "when a powerful force pushes for change. That force is usually money or a market, mixed with self-interest."

Emmott is right about that, though he may be wrong in assuming that the Japanese will not adapt to these forces and come out on top anyway. Who is to say that the self-denying strain in the culture won't overwhelm the consumerist instinct and result in a continued squirrelling away of savings by the young despite demands on their income, or, conversely, that elderly Japanese will spend like retirees in the West? Emmott also leaves aside the question of why the "unshackling of the economy" should mean weaker rather than stronger performance in the long run.

Yet even if a precipitous decline is not in the offing, *The Sun Also Sets* supplies an important lesson for U.S. policy. Any move by Japan toward free markets and foreign goods will come from a domestic political, economic, and cultural dynamic, not from the demands of foreign governments. So the only productive course for America is to turn inward to meet the Japanese challenge, which is often overstated and dramatized as a way to measure by comparison America's decline. This is a false paradigm that has the effect, intended or not, of sapping American optimism. Rather than wishing America play to its strengths, the policy intellectuals have concluded grimly that America should surrender its free-trade beliefs in favor of Japan's managed-trade approach. Evidencing his contrarian outlook, Emmott writes: "The choice, certainly for the next quarter century, is between degrees of American leadership and dominance. It is simply not between America and Japan."

This last point brings us to Steven Schlossstein's mistitled *The End of the American Century*, a crass attempt to entice Professor Paul Kennedy's doomsday market. This is most unfortunate, because Schlossstein's book, unlike Kennedy's, deserves some serious attention. The author offers a wonderful parody of the current hysteria surrounding the Japanese juggernaut. Looking back from the year 2001, Schlossstein reveals that in 1993, holding more than two-thirds of Washington's total foreign debt, Tokyo refused to take another IOU from Uncle Sam and boycotted new treasury bond issues. In 1995, Mexico defaulted on its debt, and Japan stepped in and reorganized the country into a "capitalist development state" (Chalmers Johnson's phrase for government-driven industrial growth). Japan then abetted a coup in the Philippines, forcing a U.S. withdrawal from the Clark and Subic bases. By 2001, Japan had become a nuclear power, presiding over a United States of Asia.

This exercise in exaggeration is a way for Schlossstein to posit U.S.-Japan competition as, fundamentally, a clash of values, an original contribution to a debate that focuses mostly on matters like "market access." Schlossstein believes the American century can be extended into the next millennium by mixing our competitive ethic with certain Japanese social cues—a twist to the conventional "more like Japan" question.

In his travels to Japan as a business consultant, Schlossstein has uncovered several Japanese norms about which one rarely reads (though these are related in an annoyingly belabored manner, as in "Mr. Amaya told me over a cup of pale green tea"). Mothers in Japan function as "tutors, motivators, and cheerleaders." Each day, students carry to school and back home notebooks in which mothers and teachers correspond. The family buys two sets of textbooks, one for the child and one for the mother. Sometimes, children are disciplined in school for disobedience at home. This compares favorably to the U.S. system, where the roles of teacher and parent have been overtaken by the whims of faceless administrators, politicized unionists, and the ACLU. The "liberation" of American women, he argues, has had catastrophic social costs and is in fact the root cause of America's competitive lag. In Japan, children, rather than the parents, are the true object of marriage, whereas the American family has been decimated by "role confusion," "free-choosing, self-defining baby-boomers," and "falling standards of moral legitimacy." Where the U.S. has social service bureaucracies, the Japanese put the extended family into play. Japan has harsh penalties and strict interdiction against illicit drug use; America has crack babies.

Less interesting are Schlossstein's prescriptions for an American renaissance, though it is useful to have a compendium of sound ideas in a book on U.S.-Japan relations: it shows what the U.S. can do on its own, independent of what Japan does. This includes reducing the tax on capital gains, to encourage savings; eliminating cost-of-living allowances and adopting strict means tests for federal entitlement benefits, to cut the deficit; introducing vouchers and tuition tax credits, to make schools more competitive and enhance parental choice; and revising the tax code, to provide incentives for families to stay together. Trade policy should take precedence over trade politics: special-interest groups like beef producers and tobacco farmers pack too much clout in Congress. In foreign affairs, Schlossstein also sees the choice as America's: only if we withdraw into an isolationist posture will the values of freedom and liberty in the Asian sphere be replaced by China, the Soviet Union, or a "rearmed, authoritarian" Japan.

Certainly Schlossstein has pressed all the neoconservative buttons: decentralization and entrepreneurship at home, confidence and assertiveness abroad. In this he exhibits the same confounded habit of the neoliberal mind on full display in a book such as *More Like Us*, in which author James Fallows argues persuasively that the answer to America's Japan problem lies in a renewed bourgeois ethos, only to end up paying obeisance to the dominant strain of fancy thought in Democratic circles: economic nationalism. Thus, Schlossstein notes that the cumulative impact of Japan's "closed markets" is at most $10 billion of a total annual trade deficit with Japan of $50 billion; yet he endorses the 301 provision of the Gephardt trade bill, designed to accomplish the impossible task of forcing open Japan's markets through trade retaliation. In one passage he declares that "implementing new manufacturing strategies is up to industry, not government," and in the next proposes a federal "industrial policy council that would coordinate national economic policy." While his thesis preaches the virtues of competi-

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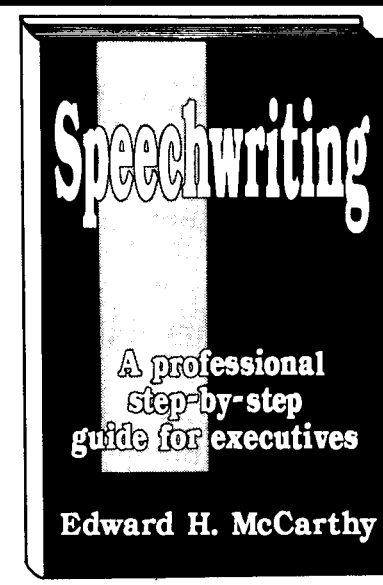

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tion, Schlossstein believes the U.S. should mount "a concerted defense against Japanese acquisition of American companies in strategic industries."

Schlossstein's indictment of the effects of the counterculture on the American enterprise is likely to be spurned by the Japan-bashing intellectuals and their allies in the Democratic party in the current full-tilt offensive against Japan. But they will be quite receptive to his argument for more central control of the U.S. economy, a retrograde, even perverse, proposition in an age when just about everyone but Fidel Castro has conceded the model's failure. It would be a tragic irony if—just as Japan too is liberalizing, as Bill Emmott reports—the U.S. should abandon the winning strategy. □

EDWARD TELLER: GIANT OF THE GOLDEN AGE OF PHYSICS

Stanley A. Blumberg and Louis G. Panos
Charles Scribner's Sons/306 pp. $24.95

Saul Lewis

Near the conclusion of their absorbing biography of Edward Teller, Stanley Blumberg and Louis Panos describe a most revealing encounter. It was back in 1987, and Gorbachev was in town, attending a White House reception given in his honor by President Reagan. As Edward Teller reached the head of the reception line, the President smiled and said to Gorbachev, "And this is Dr. Teller."

Gorbachev did not respond. So the President tried again. "This is the *famous* Edward Teller." When Gorbachev coolly observed, "There are many Tellers," Teller answered, "I agree," and walked away.

Gorbachev's undisguised hostility to Teller is quite understandable. For other than President Reagan himself, it is unlikely that there was anyone in the White House that evening who had done more to undermine Soviet power, and bring about the crisis of Communism, than Edward Teller. Yet throughout the West, it is Gorbachev who is hailed as the great peacemaker, while Teller is shunned as a "war criminal" (Berkeley students), an "enemy of humanity" (Nobel laureate I. I. Rabi), and, in the aftermath of the 1954 Oppenheimer hearings, a "Judas."

How this fantastic misunderstanding came about is recounted by Blumberg and Panos with clarity and insight. They trace Teller's life from his birth in Hungary in 1908, to his studies under such scientific giants as Werner Heisenberg and Niels Bohr, to that crucial day, May 10, 1940, when the young physicist, recently arrived in the United States, heard President Roosevelt address a scientific conference in Washington.

FDR called on the assembled scientists to "protect and defend, by every means at our command, our science, our culture, our American freedom and our civilization." As Teller recalled FDR's speech nearly half a century later, "I had the strange impression that he was talking to me. My mind was made up, and it has not changed since."

Teller's decision to use his scientific acumen to help defend America marked the start of a long and conflict-ridden journey. It was a journey that took him to Chicago and Los Alamos, where he worked with Enrico Fermi, Hans Bethe, and John von Neumann to develop the atomic bomb. From there his commitment to military research took him to the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in California, where he was the key figure in the development of the hydrogen bomb. Finally, his commitment to defense took him to Capitol Hill and the White House, where he played a decisive role in launching the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Yet despite his intense involvement in defense policy, Teller was not, at the start of his career, politically

minded. On the contrary, he seemed to believe that scientists should stick to science, and leave politics to the politicians.

Thus it happened that when Teller's mercurial friend, Leo Szilard, asked him in 1945 to sign a petition calling on the President to demonstrate the power of the atomic bomb over an unpopulated area before using it against the Japanese, Teller felt torn: On the one hand, he was inclined to agree with Szilard. On the other hand, he questioned the propriety of scientists involving themselves so directly in political controversy.

To resolve this dilemma, Teller approached the head of the atomic bomb project, J. Robert Oppenheimer. Oppenheimer advised Teller to stay out of politics. The issue of the bomb's use, Oppenheimer said, should be left in the hands of Washington officials who were "the best, the most conscientious men," and who "had information which we did not possess."

Teller was more than happy to comply with Oppenheimer's counsel, and refused to sign Szilard's petition. Later, however, Teller learned that at the very moment Oppenheimer was advising him to refrain from political activity, he was also using his immense scientific stature to urge the immediate atomic bombing of Japan. This duplicity not only embittered Teller against Oppenheimer; it was also the start of Teller's political education.

His political education was further advanced during the controversy over the hydrogen bomb. Even while working on the atomic bomb, Teller was convinced that the heat generated by an atomic explosion could be used to trigger a much more powerful thermonuclear explosion. Teller was also convinced that it was vital for the United States to develop such a weapon ahead of the Soviets. As he told Blumberg and Panos, had the Soviets gained a significant nuclear advantage over the United States, "I am not saying that they would have attacked us. The men in the Kremlin, unlike Hitler, are very cautious. But there are such things as political blackmail. And the weakness of our position, in that case, would have left us vulnerable to their pressures."

But in his efforts to rally American physicists behind the H-bomb project, Teller found his path blocked by Oppenheimer. Once again, Oppenheimer used his scientific prestige to achieve his political goals—in this case, to prevent the United States from building the H-bomb. Oppenheimer argued that such a bomb could not be built, and that even if it could be built, it was morally wrong for the United States to do so. Besides, once we built an H-bomb, the Soviets would be compelled to do likewise, and the world would be that much closer to Armageddon.

Oppenheimer's argument was one of the earliest statements of what has come to be called the "action-reaction" model of nuclear arms races. In this model, Soviet actions are seen as responses to American actions, and American actions are seen as responses to Soviet actions. This "action-reaction" pattern leads to an escalating arms race—and, eventually, to nuclear war. But if the United States were to refrain from acting, the model predicts that the Soviets would refrain from reacting, the "action-reaction" cycle would be broken, and peace would be preserved.

Today, of course, the action-reaction model has been largely discredited. For when the United States, during the heyday of détente, unilaterally refrained from building up its nuclear arsenal, in the hope of encouraging the Soviets to do likewise, it found that the Soviets were playing by a different set of rules. As former Defense Secretary Harold Brown once put it, "When we build, the Soviets build. When we don't build, they still build."

All this, however, was not as clear forty years ago as it is today. In the late forties and early fifties, most American scientists agreed with Oppenheimer, not Teller. And no one—not even Teller—knew that while the Americans were debating the morality of building an H-bomb, the Soviets had already launched a crash project to build such a weapon—a project which involved, among others, a gifted young physicist named Andrei Sakharov.

Indeed, it was only with the publication of *Sakharov Speaks*, in 1974, that it became clear that the Soviets had decided to build the H-bomb *before* the Americans did, and not in reaction to America's decision. And even today, it is not widely known that the first thermonuclear device was tested by the Soviets in 1950, about a year ahead of the United States; and the first deliverable H-bomb was exploded by the Soviets in 1953, seven months ahead of the United States.

But if Teller did not know very much about the Soviet H-bomb project, he had grown sufficiently sophisticated, politically, to beat Oppenheimer at his own game. Mobilizing whatever allies he could find in the scientific community, in Congress, and in the State and Defense Departments, he eventually succeeded in getting President Truman to commit the United States to the development of a hydrogen bomb.

But the battle was a bitter one, and it left Teller scarred. The scars had not healed in 1954, when Teller testified in the Oppenheimer security clearance

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hearings. Asked whether he regarded Oppenheimer as a security risk, Teller replied that while he always regarded Oppenheimer as a loyal American, "In a great number of instances, I have seen Dr. Oppenheimer act . . . in a way which for me was exceedingly hard to understand. . . . In this very limited sense I would like to express a feeling that I would feel personally more secure if public matters would rest in other hands."

Teller's testimony created a tremendous sensation. Both among his fellow scientists and the public at large, Teller was seen as the man who "betrayed" Oppenheimer and cost him his security clearance. Most of his academic colleagues broke off their contacts with Teller, and began a vendetta against him that continues today.

Thus, in a recent review of the Blumberg-Panos book in the *New York Times*, the Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Richard Rhodes declares, as though it were self-evident, that Teller's character suffers from "two peculiar defects": "a terror of Russia that is irrational enough to be termed clinical, and a corresponding grandiosity that makes him believe that anything is possible and nothing is unethical in the pursuit of an ever more elusive security."

How does a distinguished historian come to write such psychobabble? And why, in analyzing Teller's character, does he exclude the judgment of Andrei Sakharov, who expressed his "profound respect" for Teller? One can only conclude that Rhodes himself harbors an "irrational" hatred that verges on the "clinical"—a hatred of Edward Teller.

Yet despite the notoriety it gained him, it is clear in retrospect that Teller's testimony actually had very little to do with the outcome of the hearings. As Blumberg and Panos point out, "Teller's words were far less damaging to Oppenheimer than both the actions and the words of Oppenheimer himself." This is also the judgment of the eminent physicist Freeman Dyson. In his remarkable memoir, *Disturbing the Universe*, Dyson wrote, "Had Teller not appeared, the outcome of the hearing would almost certainly have been unaffected, and the moral force of Teller's position would not have been tainted."

Dyson's opinion is especially valuable because he remained a friend of both Teller and Oppenheimer. And his assessment of the two great antagonists seems exactly right: "Oppenheimer . . . was confused and complicated. He wanted to be on good terms with the Washington generals and to be a savior of humanity at the same time. Teller . . . was simple. He thought it was a dangerous illusion to imagine that we could save humanity by proclaiming high moral principles from a position of military weakness."

Teller's "simplicity," as Dyson calls it, cost him the esteem of most of his colleagues, and made him the Richard Nixon of nuclear physics: the scientist everyone loves to hate. But if Teller turned out to be the principal victim of the Oppenheimer hearings, in a larger sense he has been victimized by the culture of liberalism—a culture which is perfectly willing to bomb "right-wing" totalitarians to smithereens, but invariably draws the line and recovers its sense of moral "complexity" whenever left-wing totalitarians are involved.

As the old debate over the H-bomb demonstrated, and as the current debate over SDI confirms, this culture has a powerful hold on America's scientific community. So powerful, in fact, that today's generation of anti-SDI scientists is repeating—one assumes unconsciously—the same arguments used by Oppenheimer's generation to oppose the H-bomb. Thus, we are told that SDI can never work, and that even if it can work it is morally wrong for the United States to build such a "destabilizing" new system—a system that will bring us closer to Armageddon.

Leading the crusade against this liberal mindset is Edward Teller. By now, the once-timid political novice has become a seasoned activist, using every trick in the book—from his bushy eyebrows, to his emphatic way of speaking, to his firm command of the facts—to make the case for SDI. And that case, too, bears a distinct resemblance to the case for the H-bomb: the Soviets are already working on it, they are well ahead of us in certain respects, and unless we catch up, we will be vulnerable to intimidation and blackmail.

Is Teller as right about strategic defense today as he was about thermonuclear weapons forty years ago? Until SDI is successfully tested and deployed, no one can answer this question for sure. But while SDI has yet to prove itself militarily, it has already more than vindicated itself politically. Indeed, many Sovietologists believe that it was the technological challenge posed by SDI that finally broke the Soviet economy's back, and forced a reluctant Gorbachev to embark on the path of reform.

For all these reasons, it is difficult not to concur with the Blumberg-Panos verdict on Edward Teller. "History," they write, "has produced greater scientists and greater politicians, but it would be difficult to find one who has straddled both fields with such great effect on how humans live and, perhaps, on human survival." □

LIAR'S POKER: RISING THROUGH THE WRECKAGE ON WALL STREET

Michael Lewis/W. W. Norton/249 pp. $18.95

George Sim Johnston

The faculty of the boarding school I attended once announced that, in order to provide an outlet for the energies of 400 male adolescents crawling up the walls in winter term, it was going to create a "crack up" room where the students could break things, scream at the top of their lungs, and indulge in other regressive behavior. The room never got built, but in the eighties a handful of trading rooms on Wall Street provided just that sort of recreation for hundreds of young men (women were never really invited) who had the opportunity to make staggering amounts of money in a professional environment not unlike "Animal House."

Michael Lewis's *Liar's Poker* is a very funny account of what it was like trading and selling bonds on Wall Street in the mid-eighties. Lewis went through the training program at Salomon Brothers, which was the place to be back then, and then sold bonds in the firm's London office. As an alumnus of Salomon, albeit of the Corporate Finance Department, which may be glamorous to outsiders, but is regarded as a kind of statistics-gathering backwater by the traders with whom Lewis worked, I can vouch that he is not making anything up.

The money which at that time showered on children barely out of business school is already receding into the mists of fable. If you weren't making a million dollars a year trading mortgages before age thirty, you were a defective human being. Lewis writes that on his first day at Salomon, "I didn't really imagine I was going to work, more as if I were going to collect lottery winnings." That sums up the era now drawing to a close on Wall Street.

The foundation of the trading fortunes made in the last decade was laid by, of all people, Lyndon Johnson, whose fiscal policies created mountains of debt, and Paul Volcker, who as head of the Federal Reserve in 1979 let short-term rates start to bounce around like a ping-pong ball. Money and credit took on a life of their own. The Reagan Administration, which had no taste for curbing any financial excess, be it leveraged buy-outs or the crap shooting of the S&L's, gave protective cover to traders who proceeded to take full advantage of the structural imbalances in the economy.

Salomon Brothers was in a terrific position for the feeding frenzy. A pressure-cooker meritocracy, it was full of street-smart traders who might not pass muster at the Racquet Club, but who could clobber more tradition-bound firms when it came to pricing merchandise in the bond market. And suddenly, there was an unbelievable amount of merchandise, not simply from the leveraging of every sector of the economy, but from the new regulatory dispensation which allowed traders to make up any sort of security they liked—mortgage-backed bonds, leveraged preferreds, zero coupons, you name it—and sell it to investors who were usually a few weeks behind on the learning curve.

The lava flow of money—in 1984 a single trader at Salomon made $100 million dollars trading mortgaged-backed bonds—produced a lot of strange be-

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havior. It was Michael Lewis's good luck to arrive at Salomon at the peak of its power and prosperity and observe the professional apoplexy in what was for a while probably the most exciting room in America—the trading floor on the 41st floor at One New York Plaza. (Where, by the way, Tom Wolfe did his homework for *The Bonfire of the Vanities*.)

At Salomon, the more money you made, the greater the license for adolescent behavior. Lewis's portrait-painting is hysterically funny, from the pizza-eating troglodytes at the mortgage desk to the trader who throws ten dollars at a colleague heading for the airport and asks him to buy some crash insurance because, "I just feel lucky." But he also asks what many politicians are going to wonder aloud if the economy ever gets into serious trouble: What exactly does all this high-velocity spinning of money by a handful of MBAs do for the rest of the economy?

The answer is, not much. As Lewis correctly points out, if social contribution is the measure, the new breed of Wall Street trader would be billed rather than paid at the end of the year. In the event of a serious economic contraction, there could be a populist backlash against the hotshots who have grown rich by leveraging America. But most likely, the markets will finally impose their own discipline—traders will run out of hedges, the ziggurats of debt will begin to shake, and there will be a reckoning.

But just as one does not begrudge the misbehavior of aristocrats in seventeenth-century France simply because it is so entertaining to read about, it is hard not to be amused at the late twentieth-century equivalent—the 26-year-old bond trader with no family, no mortgage, no responsibilities, just a job which gushes cash. Someday, when the yuppie has gone the way of the flapper, books like *Liar's Poker* will be read with the same incredulity as memoirs from the court of Louis XIV. □

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THE LOST CONTINENT: TRAVELS IN SMALL-TOWN AMERICA

Bill Bryson/Harper & Row/314 pp. $19.95

Donna Rifkind

There seems to be boundless enthusiasm on the part of book publishers for bringing out accounts by people who have spent a lot of time driving around America. The most familiar of these accounts is probably John Steinbeck's *Travels With Charley* (1962), while perhaps the most popular recent example is William Least Heat Moon's *Blue Highways* (1982). The journey itself lends these books an unvarying linear structure and a uniformity of tone: there's a leisurely, rambling feel for time and space, with plenty of room for lyrical passages and a touch of melancholy here and there, when the writer gets nostalgic for the way he imagines America used to be.

Bill Bryson's *The Lost Continent*, the latest of these "on the road" books, is described on its dust jacket as the author's "sardonic account of his travels across thirty-eight states." Bryson is an American writer who lives in London and seems to feel qualified for publishing his observations about America because he comes from Des Moines and took long car trips with his family when he was a child. As he explains it, every summer of his youth his father, "seized with a quietly maniacal urge to get out of the state and go on vacation," would load up the car and drag his family around the country. Now in his mid-thirties, Bryson himself "became gripped with a curious urge to go back to the land of my youth and make what the blurb writers like to call a journey of discovery."

> I wanted to see lightning bugs [Bryson continues], and hear cicadas shrill, and be inescapably immersed in that hot, crazy-making August weather that makes your underwear scoot up every crack and fissure and cling to you like latex, and drives mild-mannered men to pull out handguns in bars and light up the night with gunfire. I wanted to look for NeHi Pop and Burma Shave signs. . . . I wanted to travel around. I wanted to see America. I wanted to come home.

What exactly does Bryson see in America in the 1980s? Little that makes his heart leap for joy. He is searching, as he admits, for the perfect small town, "a place of harmony and industry, a place without shopping malls and oceanic parking lots, without factories and drive-in churches, without Kwik-Kraps and Jiffi-Shits and commercial squalor from one end to the other." Needless to say he doesn't find this town, but neither does he find much to get excited about. In fact, the primary emotion he exhibits is boredom. Of southeast Iowa he says: "Compared with an afternoon in a darkened room, it wasn't bad. But compared with, say, the coast road along the Sorrentine peninsula, it was perhaps a little tame." Crossing Missouri, he wonders if the license-plate nickname "The Show-Me State" might mean "Show Me the Way to Any Other State." "It would be difficult to conceive of a more remote and cheerless state than Nevada," according to Bryson, and South Dakota is "the world's first drive-through sensory deprivation chamber."

It's clear that Bryson's exasperation is put on largely for easy laughs, and he does manage to be pretty funny about a lot of things. His narrative is engineered to include a maximum number of jokes, and I laughed at many of the most sophomoric ones, like this comment about the Pennsylvania Dutch in Lancaster County: "The Mennonites are named after a well-known brand of speed-stick deodorant." People in the West, says Bryson, walk with a lope and look "vaguely suspicious and squinty, as if they think they might have to shoot you in a minute." The West is a land of drifters, all looking to make fortunes as movie stars or rock stars or game-show contestants; "and if things don't work out they can always become a serial murderer."

I was also taken in by Bryson's occasional self-deprecating modesty. ("When it comes to making shrewd generalizations," he admits at one point, "I am a cretin.") But other things about *The Lost Continent* were less admirable. Bryson is prone to making the most outrageously superficial observations with no trace of irony or facetiousness. He finds Columbus, Mississippi, a "deeply pleasing and encouraging place," for instance, because

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the first thing he sees there is "an obviously well-educated black man in a three-piece suit carrying a *Wall Street Journal.*" Similarly, Selma, Alabama, meets with his approval because it now appears that blacks and whites are getting along there. On the other hand, in the college town of Auburn, Bryson reflects that students' concerns today "seem to be sex and keeping their clothes looking nice. I don't think learning comes into it very much."

This kind of generalizing banality occurs often enough to be irritating. "Macon was nice," the author comments; "all the towns in the South seemed to be nice." Colonial Williamsburg, for all its fakery, is "relentlessly attractive. And for that reason I liked it." Bryson so much as confesses that he thinks all rich, pretty towns in America are good, while all poor towns are beyond redemption. The ski resort of Sun Valley, Idaho, is "most agreeable," while Wells, Nevada, where "almost everything in town appeared to exist on the edge of dereliction," is "the sorriest, seediest, most raggedy-assed town I've ever seen." These snap judgments are in direct contradiction to Bryson's conviction that cars, suburbs, and "indiscriminate wealth" have "spoiled American life." Nor do they explain why, when he sees an expensive car driven by a blonde coed, he offers this sentiment: "If I could have run fast enough to keep up, I would happily have urinated all down the side of it."

The America Bryson shows us is a curiously unpopulated one. He appears to go out of his way to avoid talking to anyone, except for a few laconic interchanges, when necessary, with waitresses and gas-station attendants. In the past, most "on the road" books have included their authors' discussions with characters in two-bit towns; but Bryson can't be bothered with anything so mundane as actually talking to Americans. The only people with whom he spends any time at all are his brother's family in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, a couple of journalist friends outside Philadelphia, another college friend in Iowa City, and a bemused niece in a small college in Santa Fe. Otherwise, people are seen from a distance only, and usually with some degree of scorn: tourists in the Smoky Mountains are "always fat and dress like morons"; K-Marts across the country are "always full of the sort of people who give their children names that rhyme . . . the sort of people who would stay in to watch 'The Munsters.' " RV drivers are "strange and dangerous people and on no account should be approached."

But I suppose you can't, in the end, make too much of Bryson's superficialities and contradictions. It doesn't really matter that a book with the subtitle "Travels in Small-Town America" includes among its small towns Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and New York City. What counts, for Bryson, is that he be entertaining at all costs—and, for the most part, he is. After driving through all but ten of the lower forty-eight states, over a distance of 13,798 miles, Bryson proudly sums up: "I saw pretty much everything I wanted to see and a good deal that I didn't . . . I didn't get shot or mugged. The car didn't break down. I wasn't once approached by a Jehovah's Witness. I still had sixty-eight dollars and a clean pair of underpants. Trips don't come much better than that." But what has Bryson managed to discover in America? Outside his own capacity for drive-through comedy, virtually nothing. □

PICTURING WILL

Ann Beattie/Random House/230 pp. $18.95

James Bowman

What Hugh Kenner calls "the Jane chord"—the first and last words of a book as a gnomic commentary on what goes on between them—is At/ball. That provides as good a way as any to look at *Picturing Will.* On one level the novel is, for most of its length, a particularly dreary and pointless ball game in which the title character, a five-year-old boy, is bounced back and forth between various parents and surrogate parents to no very obvious purpose. Then, at the end, all but one of them drop him, and the one who is left holding the ball is deemed the winner.

This is the boy's stepfather, Mel. It turns out that he cares more for Will, as a new human being in the world, than either of his natural parents does. Very contemporary. The journal that he keeps for Will puts in a couple of early appearances, set off by italics, but it is only at the end that we realize it is his. If a ball is also a festive occasion, we may say that there is something of the celebratory about this part of the book: it is a frigid cotillion, a huddled ovation in honor of the way in which children manage to grow up both because of and in spite of the tutelary figures assigned to them by chance.

The slang sense of "ball" is also appropriate when we get to Wayne, Will's randy daddy. Wayne is even more a leftover sixties person than the rest of the adult characters, even more than Miss Beattie herself. And "balling" was something that sixties people did more out of a sense of self-affirmation than eroticism—something almost shockingly joyless and sterile. Will, both novel and character, is the product of such people, and it/he never quite recovers from the fact.

If this seems a rather whimsical way in which to attempt serious comment upon what purports to be a serious book, it is appropriate when the book itself is as disjointed as *Picturing Will.* Architecturally the novel is quite tightly constructed, but it is an architecture of cotton candy: at the textural level it seems to have almost no substance. Jody, Will's mother, is in the habit of stuffing little bits of the detritus of her life—cash register receipts, children's drawings, junk mail, candy wrappers—into an envelope and mailing them to her ex-husband without comment, and it is not long before the reader is beginning to feel like poor Wayne—bombarded with triviality.

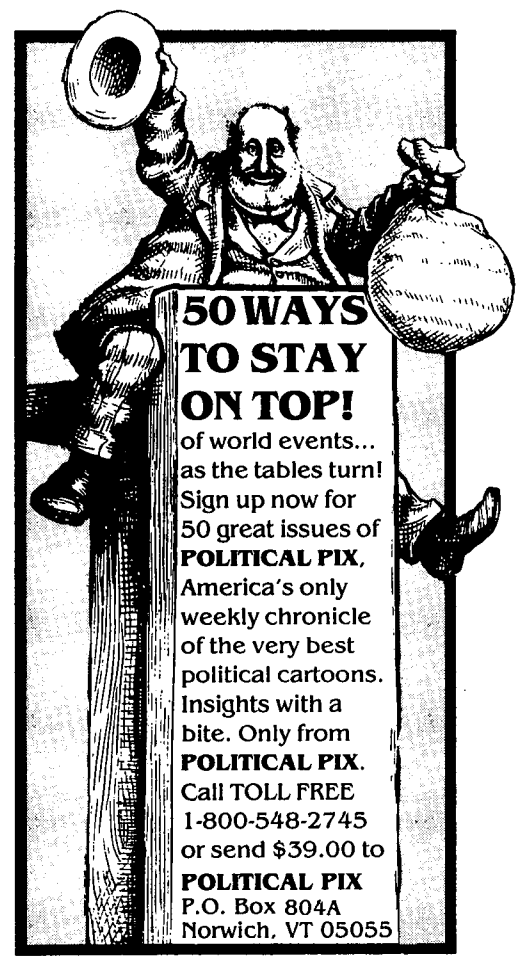
Ann Beattie is sometimes spoken of as a "minimalist" author, and I confess that I am unable quite to make out what the word can mean in this context. On the contrary, she seems to me if anything *maximalist* in the way she piles up meaningless and unnecessary details:

> The fan above the cash register was blowing. Dalt was slightly cross-eyed. He was wearing one of his many baseball caps studded with fishing lures. Some of the caps had buttons with funny sayings on them, and one—a gift from his daughter, which the customers sensed wasn't to be laughed at—had a small heart-shaped frame above the brim that contained a picture of Dalt's fat-cheeked granddaughter, Melanie Rae. Customers found out the child's name even if they drank at the bar only one time. Large photos could be pointed out on the bulletin board above the cash register if he didn't have her silver-framed image riding high above his forehead.

As this is the only appearance of both Dalt and Melanie Rae in the novel, Miss Beattie's readers must feel rather like Dalt's customers: admitted to an unsought intimacy for no apparent reason. Perhaps Dalt is there as an authorial self-portrait?

The cumulative effect of such stuff is a state of more or less permanent dislocation, which is not altogether without interest. When, for instance, she identifies *Those are pearls that were his eyes* as "a line from 'The Waste Land,' " the effect is of a deliberate foreshortening of historical perspective. Neither these late twentieth-century characters nor their creator can see as far back as Shakespeare, whose words here are only known as one of the "fragments" Eliot shored against his ruin. Natural enough, for such a dealer in fragments as Ann Beattie. Or consider her character D. B. Haverford. For some reason, after his introduction he is referred to by everybody throughout the rest of the book as "Haveabud." Is this a feeble joke—Have-a-Ford/Have-a-Bud—that she just never got tired of? Maybe. But it is both a constant irritant and the means by which we are prevented from ever bringing the man quite into focus.

Photography is Jody's occupation and as near as we get to an organizing *leitmotif* in the novel, so it is also dislocating to notice the author's poor eye for scene-snapping, her poor ear for dialogue. It may be that, if you look hard enough, you can find both rhododendrons and maple trees in Florida, but to make a feature of them in a Florida landscape is like writing of the glaciers of the rain forest or the jungle of the Sahara. Can this unearthly—or rather half-earthly—topography be deliberate? Or consider this bit of dialogue: →



James Bowman is American correspondent of the Spectator *of London.*

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"You know what heaven would be?" Zeke said, looking over at Wayne from the diving board, where he was sitting. "Surf 'n' Turf," he said. "Heavy on the butter with the Turf, too. And a side of steamers with broth to dunk 'em in to clean out the sand."

"I think heaven for you would be the certainty of your convictions," Wayne said. "Not having to check with anyone to see whether they'd bear you out. Not caring if other people felt the way you did. Not caring jack shit, unless you felt like considering their opinion."

Buttered steak? "The certainty of your convictions"? The excrement of the Florida fish commonly referred to as the jack? Do Florida landscaping operatives really talk like this? Perhaps they do in the dream-setting where they also spend their time planting out rhododendrons.

Somehow, however, we can't summon up the energy to care very much. Like Zeke himself, the world in which he lives seems to matter hardly at all to our perspective on Will. Or perhaps to Will's own childish perspective on an adult world where everything is still as strange as Florida rhododendrons are to us. Much of the novel, that is, is kept at a distance from anything recognizable as actuality, even within the limited terms established by its half-hearted attempts at verisimilitude. If this is the author's way of making it new, so that rather than picturing Will we can picture as he does, it is more bewildering than exhilarating. The fact remains that it's not *true*, and one is left with the horrible suspicion that Miss Beattie would reply with sixties profundity: "Like, man, what *is* truth?" □

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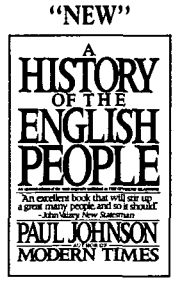

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FROM BEIRUT TO JERUSALEM

Thomas L. Friedman/Farrar, Straus & Giroux/525 pp. $22.95

Steven C. Munson

In 1983, Thomas L. Friedman won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting from Lebanon. In 1988, he won another Pulitzer, this time for his reporting from Israel. Over the past ten years, he has been the recipient of numerous other honors, including an Overseas Press Club Award, a George Polk Award, a Livingston Award for Young Journalists, a New York Newspaper Guild Page One Award, and a New Israel Fund Award for Outstanding Reporting from Israel.

In addition to being a celebrated journalist, Friedman has recently become a celebrated author. *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, a memoir of his experiences as a *New York Times* reporter in the Middle East, was published last summer to glowing reviews. It quickly became a bestseller and ended the year by garnering a National Book Award.

Like the reporting that won him his two Pulitzer Prizes, the book revolves around what Friedman heard, saw, and felt in the midst of two large events: the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and the Israeli effort to quell the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza that began in 1987. His portrait of Lebanon is highly personal and atmospheric. It suffers from an accumulation of trivial, pointless, or irrelevant information, and more than a few of the stories he tells about life in Beirut sound forced, or out of place. To some extent, this disconnectedness —incoherence, really—probably reflects the reporter's difficulty in making sense of his circumstances; the situation in Lebanon is, after all, neither clear-cut nor easy to come to grips with. Primarily, however, Friedman's literary failure appears to be the result of certain inhibitions he feels when writing about Lebanon.

He himself admits that as a reporter in Beirut he fell far short of giving his readers a complete picture of what was going on. Like other journalists, he worked under conditions of constant fear and uncertainty, and had no illusions that the various Lebanese factions—Christian, Muslim, PLO, Syrian —would tolerate much seriously critical reporting of their activities. He tells how he and his colleagues devised all manner of ingenious tricks in order to write stories that would not get them into trouble and would be more than just fluff. But it is clear, despite his best efforts to minimize the implications of what he is saying, that the factions in Lebanon that posed the greatest danger were also the ones that received the most deferential treatment.

Perhaps no group benefited more from this state of affairs than the PLO. As Friedman writes, "How many serious stories were written from Beirut about the well-known corruption in the PLO leadership, the misuse of funds, and the way in which the organization had become as much a corporation full of bureaucratic hacks as a guerrilla outfit? . . . The truth is, the Western press coddled the PLO and never judged it with anywhere near the scrutiny that it judged Israeli, Phalangist, or American behavior. . . . The overfocusing by reporters on the PLO and its perception of events also led them to ignore the Lebanese Shiites and their simmering wrath at the Palestinians for turning their villages in south Lebanon into battlefields."

That Friedman himself was quite prepared to coddle the PLO is clear from his account of a meeting he and his assistant Mohammed had with Mahmoud Labadi, Arafat's personal spokesman in Beirut, in July 1982:

> "Mahmoud," I said, "let's get everything out in the open. I'm Jewish and you know I'm Jewish. When my editors asked me how they could send a Jew to Beirut, I told them it was no problem. I told them I had never encountered any difficulties with the PLO because of my religion. If the rules of the game have changed, then let me know and I'll go back to the Commodore and pack my bags."
>
> "No, no," said Labadi, waving his hand. "That is not necessary. We have nothing against Jews. We just want you to do a little better in the future."
>
> "Fine," I said. "I will try to be fair. I have been trying up to now."
>
> After the meeting, Labadi took Mohammed aside and told him, "We know he's not bad. We just need more from him."

But the "overfocusing by reporters on the PLO and its perception of events" cannot simply have been the result of their fear of retaliation. Otherwise, there would have been plenty of stories about the PLO's depredations in southern Lebanon once the cause of the journalists' fear had been removed. As it was, even after the Israeli invasion liberated southern Lebanon from PLO control, there was hardly more than a handful of stories about the ten years of PLO occupation, the crimes committed against the Lebanese, or the nature of the PLO state-within-a-state.

What there was, instead, was a torrent of misreporting of the Israeli invasion and the attribution to Israel of crimes that existed only in the minds of those who invented them and the journalists who publicized them. Day in and day out, week after week, the Israelis were depicted in the newspapers and on television as ruthless aggressors raining death and destruction on the helpless civilians of Beirut and, like modern-day Nazis, committing genocide against the Palestinians. It may be hard for many people to remember what it was like reading the papers or watching TV in the summer of 1982, but surely Friedman remembers. Yet he makes no reference to the journalistic rampage against Israel other than to note that "some of the news reporting out of Beirut that summer left something to be desired."

Nor does he take the opportunity afforded him by his book to set the record straight concerning the PLO. Out of five hundred pages there are no more than a few paragraphs in which he refers—as though the whole episode were so well known that the details were not worth bothering about—to what the PLO was up to during its years in southern Lebanon. Instead of examining the PLO conquest and how it destabilized the country, he devotes an entire chapter to the life and times of the man he calls the "symbol" of Palestinian "resistance," Yasir Arafat. In other words, Friedman is guilty in his book of precisely the same kind of "overfocusing on the PLO and its perception of events"—that is, precisely the same kind of self-censorship—that he and his colleagues were guilty of in their reporting from Beirut.

How is it possible, one cannot help wondering, that he has ended up committing the same journalistic sin twice? Can it be that, although he is now safely ensconced in Washington, D.C. as his newspaper's chief diplomatic correspondent, he is still afraid of what the PLO might do to him if he dares to tell the truth? Is he, indeed, so terrified that he feels compelled to continue writing the kind of public-relations fluff that can be found in his chapter

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on Arafat, "The Teflon Guerrilla"? The answer, clearly, is no. It is not fear that impels him to hold his pen now, any more than it was fear, primarily, that impelled him to hold his pen in 1982. What inhibits Friedman from telling the truth about the PLO today, just as it inhibited him when he was in Beirut, is his political sympathy for the organization and the cause he claims it represents.

This sympathy is evident throughout the book, from his characterization of Arafat as "the Ronald Reagan of Palestinian politics" and "a kind of Arab Pope" to his insistence that the PLO is a genuine "national liberation" movement to his rationalization that "terrorism, while morally repugnant, was functionally relevant for the PLO at its takeoff stage." Yet nowhere, perhaps, does he make his identification with the PLO and its goals more vivid than in his almost lyrical tribute to the Palestinian guerrillas trapped in Beirut—a band of brave and dedicated men who, we are meant to believe, would have thrown themselves in front of Israeli tanks, if only Arafat had given the word.

Of course, among this group of noble guerrillas there were undoubtedly many who had participated in the running of the Palestinian state-within-a-state that the PLO had established in southern Lebanon. Despite the neglect this subject has received from journalists like Friedman, no one disputes the fact that the primary activities of this mini-state were pillage, blackmail, and terror—that it was, in short, largely an organized criminal enterprise. Had he told the full story of the PLO state-within-a-state, however, it would have been all but impossible for him to go on, as he does in the second half of the book, to present the case for a full-fledged Palestinian state in part of the territory now occupied by Israel.

The Israel section of *From Beirut to Jerusalem* is more focused, more straightforward, more down-to-earth than the portion devoted to Lebanon. At times, Friedman even manages to bring his subject to life, as with this memorable description of the country by the American-born writer and former government press spokesman Ze'ev Chafets:

> For two thousand years, all these people have been crying and pleading and begging God to give them a country. I wanted to see it, but when I came here I found out that Israel resonated for me. I quickly realized I felt at home here, even though these people were not like people I had grown up with. When the Moroccans first came to Israel, there was this thing that Moroccans always used to walk in the road. And people would ask why. Didn't they have sidewalks in Morocco? No. The reason was that this was *their* country. There's no plantation owner around. Now they can walk in the f--king street if they want to. I had a little bit of that feeling myself. Israel is how Jews behave when they are off the plantation—when there are no Gentiles around watching over them. All the things here that Americans complain about I liked. I liked the bad manners. I liked the directness, I liked the excitement, the adrenaline. I felt comfortable with these people. I never really articulated it, but on some unconscious level I got off the airplane and thought to myself, This is the place. I belong here.

Unfortunately, such moments are few and are ultimately overrun, or driven out, by Friedman's anti-Israel bias, which does almost as much to ruin the book as his politically inspired reticence about the PLO.

The contrast between his cordiality toward the PLO and his hostility toward Israel could not be more striking: when it comes to Israel, Friedman doesn't coddle, doesn't cower, and doesn't cover up. A case in point is the confrontation he had with Amir Drori, the commander of the Israeli forces in Lebanon, a week after the massacre of Muslim civilians by Lebanese Christians at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut in September 1982. Far from adopting the placating tone that marked his exchange with PLO spokesman Labadi, he took the Israeli general to task in a fit of moral pique:

> I banged the table with my fist and shouted at Drori, "How could you do this? How could you not see? How could you not know?"

And while he depicts Yasir Arafat as a flawed genius and a moral hero, Friedman takes a dim view, to put it mildly, of Israel's political leaders. In his eyes, for example, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin was a man who "loved the idea of Jewish power, Jewish generals, Jewish tanks, Jewish pride. They were his pornography. . . . But what made Begin even more dangerous was that his fantasies about power were combined with a self-perception of being a victim. . . . Begin always reminded me of Bernhard Goetz . . . he was Bernhard Goetz with an F-15."

Even more of a monster than Begin, by Friedman's lights, was Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon. Sharon "had his own fantasies about power. . . . Unlike [Syrian dictator] Hafez Assad, Sharon did not know when to stop. . . . Assad was a brutal realist with a very limited agenda— survival. . . . Sharon was a brutal realist with a strategic design. . . . That is precisely what made him so dangerous in Lebanon."

About the exact nature of the danger posed by Begin and Sharon to Lebanon Friedman is never very clear. Indeed he cannot be, for in truth, as even he must acknowledge, the Israeli invasion was welcomed by the many Lebanese who were grateful to be liberated from the PLO. The invasion also paved the way for a renewal of American interest in Lebanon, a renewal that, by his account, was widely interpreted by the Lebanese to be the beginning of the end of the decade of internecine warfare that had begun after the arrival of the PLO. Furthermore, despite his omissions and distortions, he is unable to obscure the fact that it was only after Israel was forced to withdraw, and the U.S. lost heart and withdrew, that the "definitive dismemberment of both Beirut and Lebanon" came about.

A similar disparity between reality and Friedman's politicized view of it emerges from his examination of the situation in the West Bank and Gaza. He gives over several pages, for instance, to a discussion of allegations that Palestinians have been tortured, unreasonably detained, and denied due process by Israeli authorities. Although he acknowledges that "most of the Palestinians convicted by the Shin Bet [Israel's internal security service] were guilty of planning or carrying out violent acts against Israeli civilians, even if the evidence against them was incomplete, inadmissible or obtained through intimidation," he blithely disregards the significance of this fact, insisting that there is no real moral difference between the violence of the *intifada* and Israel's efforts to control it.

He seems even less willing to accept the truth about the Palestinians, which confronted him one day in the visa office of the U.S. consulate in Jerusalem. Wondering why all the people there were so desperately trying to leave their "homeland," he interviewed a number of Palestinians who rejected his claim that "this is a crucial moment in Palestinian history." They told him that the only thing they wanted was to get an education, or to resume their children's education, and to escape the fear and violence created by the *intifada*. Again, determined not to comprehend the meaning of what he has seen and heard, Friedman breezily dismisses it, concluding that, "Nevertheless, the *intifada* has done a great deal for the Palestinians."

It has done so much, in his view, that he urges the Palestinians to continue what they've started—even though, as he sees it, it could take years before the Israelis might finally be worn down enough to give them a state. The prospect of many more Palestinians getting themselves killed or injured—perhaps for nothing—does not seem to faze him, although his description of the stone-throwing and fire-bombing as "massive, relatively non-lethal civil disobedience" is clearly intended to make his call for continued violence more palatable.

This sort of carelessness about other people's lives is displayed throughout the book, but it is about Israel's survival that Friedman seems to be the most cavalier. The idea that the country should have anything to fear any longer from the world, or even from its avowed enemies, is one that he simply refuses to take seriously. Such was not

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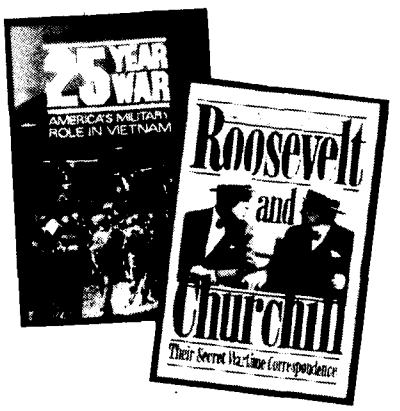

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always the case. As he makes a point of confessing, "high school for me, I am now embarrassed to say, was one big celebration of Israel's victory in the Six-Day War." He also reminds us that in those days, among people like himself—that is to say, liberals—Israel enjoyed the blessings of a heroic image. To show just how popular the country was back then, he quotes an old *Washington Star* column by Mary McGrory:

> Some of us never knew what a *simcha* was. We know now. It's what happens when the Arabs admit they've had it—again—and there are 30,000 Jews in Lafayette Park to celebrate. That's what a *simcha* is. We were all Jews in the park yesterday . . . we wept, we embraced each other. We sang the Israeli national anthem, "Hatikva." We observed a moment of silence for all who had fallen, heard the melancholy summons of the shofar.

Needless to say, it is difficult to imagine such a column being written today. Attitudes toward Israel have undergone a radical shift from sympathy to hostility, and ideas that were once inconceivable to many people—that Israel has lost its soul, that Israel is the main obstacle to Middle East peace, that Israel is no better than its Arab neighbors—have been embraced with a vengeance. This is certainly the case with Friedman, who makes no claim to originality and, indeed, seems to prefer the company of the pack. But if his political ideas are thoroughly conventional, his acceptance of them does have a distinguishing aspect: he embraces the current anti-Israel perspective as a Jew. He makes much of this in the book, and his many admirers, in singing the book's praises, have made much of it as well. For them, as for Friedman, it serves as a special kind of moral license, entitling the bearer to add his own contribution to the campaign of defamation against Israel, and to do so without fear of rebuke. □

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CORRESPONDENCE
(continued from page 9)

number of Reform Communists in the new regime, of course.) It is not that massive repression is impossible. It is that anyone attempting a return to the bad old days must now ask himself if he wishes to risk Ceausescu's fate. How many Communists with sufficient fanatic edge to risk vicious internecine war exist in the East? Pray we do not find out, but also admit that the beginning is rather hopeful.

Second, our hand is not pat. We want a situation which yields healthy, democratic, stable societies, as rapidly as possible. Years of instability, economic stagnation, and somewhat authoritarian rule may sap these peoples of their drive to rejoin Europe, and give darker forces their chance to reassert themselves strongly. We have strong strategic, as well as humanitarian, interests in trying to influence the outcome, when social and economic prospects are uncertain due to the terrible ravages of Communism.

Third, Franco and Salazar were despots and their societies were backward, but essentially they tried to protect traditional society against the dynamic side-effects of modernization. They did not act so destructively as Hitler, or Stalin and his successors. Not only do we have greater interest in the outcome, in Eastern Europe, but there is more healing needed.

What, then, do I propose? That we interest ourselves in helping with institution-building, in proportion to the liberalization of any given country. This does not mean merely aiding with elections. Rather, it means encouraging currency reform; helping to train legal scholars in, for example, the principles of commercial law; helping train CPA's; aiding in the development of capital markets and credit instruments; acquainting them with the ways various legislatures expedite business, especially as pertains to oversight responsibilities; training pollsters; suggesting ways of defining the legal status of non-governmental public institutions—for example, non-profit corporations; training statisticians; and other such help through which they can expeditiously grapple with the problems of constructing modern liberal democratic societies. In addition, it seems reasonable that there be actual investment in Eastern Europe, not by our government, of course, but by businessmen. Beyond technology restrictions, I see little reason to hamper it. I am uncomfortable with the contemptuous allusion to capitalist rope-sellers. Some businessmen are idiotic and venal; so are some politicians. By and large, though, I think that Western participation in the development of Eastern bloc economies will be a "good infection," encouraging the process of economic liberalization. Finally, I agree with Mr. Ledeen that occasional humanitarian aid may be appropriate.

Perhaps Mr. Ledeen and I are not so far apart. It is hard to tell, for he was being a bit cagey. I hope that he will be afforded an opportunity to respond, so that we can see.

—Michael David Blume
Annapolis, Maryland

Michael Ledeen replies:
I'm grateful to Michael David Blume for his thoughtful comments. We agree on most things, such as the desirability of private investment in Eastern Europe, and the obvious need for support to democratic forces there (he calls it institution-building). We also agree that Eastern Europe—and, though he doesn't say so, I assume he agrees, the Soviet Union as well—is extremely explosive.

We disagree over where things stand at the moment, not over where things are headed and where our interests lie. He says that, after Rumania, no one should think that we're at "the beginning of the beginning." But Rumania is the purest example of the triumph of Communist Gorbachevites at the expense of real democracy. The fall of Ceausescu was a purge, pure and simple. The new regime is "reformist Communism," just as Gorbachev intended from the beginning. I do not think it will last, indeed I wrote long before most others that Gorbachev's lack of understanding of democratic revolution and his cowardly refusal to enact an effective economic program had led him to adopt a doomed strategy. He is now forced to cope with his own failures—political and economic—in his own society, and I believe that in the end the forces of democracy will prevail there as well. But there is a long way to go, and I cannot imagine it all happening without considerable violence. We tend to forget that there has already been a lot of bloodshed, but when the Chinese do it in front of CNN the world denounces it; when the Russians do it in Azerbaijan, with no TV cameras, we cluck understandingly, and the President expresses sympathy for the invaders.

I believe we hold a pat hand because we have what the Soviet Empire needs to survive, and we can deprive them of it unless they meet our democratic and strategic conditions. Mr. Blume says rightly that we need to withhold certain militarily useful technology from them. Let him say that to Secretary Mosbacher, who hasn't gotten the message. He is busily decontrolling all sorts of exotic technologies for sale to Eastern Europe (which promptly turns it over to the Soviets) and even to the Soviets directly. This is madness, for it encourages the Kremlin to believe that it can weasel its way out of the jam. I want to keep the controls on, until and unless the democrats come to power in those societies. There is still not a single security service in Eastern Europe under democratic control; not a single interior ministry; not a single defense ministry. I believe the democrats will eventually gain control, but they are not there yet.

And as for the Soviet Union, we are presented with the hilarious spectacle of the monopoly position of the Communist party being destroyed by . . . a unanimous (save Yeltsin) vote of the Communist party leaders. It is still only the beginning of the beginning.

It Won't Be Easy
My wife, native New Orleanian that she is, wishes to thank Victor Gold from the bottom of her heart for "We Never Called It 'The Big Easy'" (*TAS*, February 1990). Now if some other kind soul could do the same for me, native Manhattanite that I am, and pen a "We Never Called It 'The Big Apple,'" I'd be eternally in your debt.

—Robert J. Powers,
Shreveport, Louisiana

More Fear and Loathing
It frightens me as to how my name got on your mailing list. I read Tyrrell sometimes when my blood pressure is too low. What scares me more than anything is that if I subscribed to your magazine, a little of that may go to the fund to put silly Reagan's face on Mount Rushmore. For that I would turn in my passport.

—Mildred Haub
Oakland Park, Florida

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A stupendous exegesis of Miss Marabel Morgan's famed hamburger metaphor from Dr. Carol J. Adams, who in less enlightened times probably would not be invited to lecture at a major university:

In *Total Joy*, Marabel Morgan unites women and animals through the use of the metaphor of hamburger. Morgan fosters her own Shmoo syndrome in advising women to consider themselves like hamburger in serving their husbands' needs: "but like hamburger you may have to prepare yourself in a variety of different ways now and then." Her sentence structure—"like hamburger you may"—implies that hamburger prepares itself in a variety of ways, and so must you. But hamburger, long before arriving in the kitchen of the total woman, has been denied all agency and can do no preparing. "You," woman/wife, refers to and stands in for hamburger. Women stand in relationship to the "total woman" as they do to "hamburger," as something that is objectified, without agency, that must be prepared, reshaped, acculturated to be made consummable [sic] in a patriarchal world. Though the referent is absent, women cannot escape recognizing themselves in it. And just as animals do not desire to be eaten, Morgan's sentence structure subverts her attempt to convince women that they do.

[From The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory, *by Carol J. Adams, Continuum Publishing, 256 pp. $22.95]*

New York Times

From among America's career *indignados*, Dr. Anthony Lewis repeats himself, repeats himself, repeats himself . . . :

When has a President responded so feebly to the challenge of historic change? When has the idea of American leadership been so mocked?

The Communist Party is losing its monolithic grip on the Soviet Union. Soviet republics are threatening to break away. Across Central and Eastern Europe freedom is rising.

And how does George Bush respond? He goes on a tour to campaign for military spending. He asks Congress for new strategic nuclear weapons systems. He demands 25 percent more money for Star Wars.

[February 9, 1990]

From the Soviet Union to South Africa, societies are confronting their fundamental problems. Immobilism is giving way to change. There has never been a time in the world like this, we say to each other.

But one great country is not confronting its problems. It is avoiding them, refusing to risk the uncertainty of change. That country is the United States.

America's problems are no secret.

[February 20, 1990]

Nation

For those 1960s leftists still sozzled on the hooch that flows so copiously from this old sponge, authoress Katrina van den Heuvel tells how George let Gorby down once again:

The American invasion of Panama was the first—and in the West the least reported—setback for Gorbachev's domestic and foreign policies. The sending of 26,000 U.S. troops to capture the dictator of a tiny country shattered Gorbachev's assumption, already disputed among the Soviet national security elite, that Washington had accepted his "new thinking," which rules out the use of force to settle international differences. Conservative Soviet civilian and military officials, forced to watch in dismay as Communist parties collapsed across Eastern Europe, were quick to note the contrast. As one military officer said in disgust, "We look like a pitiful giant." A pro-Gorbachev diplomat said to me with visible despair, "Your President has given our opponents a wonderful New Year's present."

[February 12, 1990]

SF

(San Francisco, California)

An inscrutable communique from the city by the bay:

In the global recycling picture, the Soviets are definitely one up on the West. Cans, bottles and newspapers seem hopelessly passe when you consider the Russians are making jewelry, candlesticks and clocks from disassembled parts of SS-20 missiles. Just think of the new channels they've opened in the disarmament negotiations, not to mention being incredibly fashion forward.

And who more appropriate to lead us into the age of wearable weaponry than San Francisco's own arbiter of social decorum, Pat Montandon?

Montandon intends to introduce this line of missile-art along with other choice Soviet crafts in her Perestroika shop, scheduled to open in SOMA sometime in April.

"I'm even having the Soviets send me a whole dismantled missile to go on the ceiling of the store," Montandon says.

Other items on the inventory list include dolls made out of reindeer fur, wood platters carved with Russian fairy-tale themes, copper healing bracelets and Red Army uniforms.

At the same time, Montandon is working on exporting a line of cosmetics for Soviet women.

"We're going to make a video to show them how to apply cosmetics and send our people over to do makeup seminars. I don't think it's a far-out idea. It's like playing baseball after the earthquake. You feel better about yourself if you put a little blush on—it takes your mind off the fact that you can't get a loaf of bread."

[February 1990]

Newsweek

In the "My Turn" column of this famed weekly, an aesthete recalls the first of her visits to the friendly abortionist:

During the procedure I sang "Here Comes the Sun" to myself as I stared at the ceiling. Oh, there is the whir of the vacuum the booklet said I'd hear; here come the strong cramps I'm supposed to feel. Afterward the doctor gave me some peanut-butter cookies and I went out to the waiting room feeling more cleansed and relieved than sad.

[February 12, 1990]

Santa Barbara News-Press

And the pettiness continues:

For the Record

A quote was incorrectly attributed to Dr. Martin Luther King in an article on the Sunday Forum page. The quoted matter is actually from the Bible, Isaiah 40:4-5.

[January 17, 1990]

Washington Post TV Week

Mr. Corbin Bernsen, the Olivier of "L.A. Law," dumps the contents of his mind onto a page of the incomparable *Post*'s television listings and levitates away:

He talks of legalizing drugs, revamping the United States Constitution, scrapping religion and electing dual presidents. But first, he wants to clean up the place. His method: theater, scripts, movies.

He'll start out by producing and starring in a trilogy set just before the year 2000, a date he views as "a fresh start." He plans a theatrical release, primarily because of TV's restrictions, he said.

"I want to study mankind at this time," he explained. "I'll be 45 in the year 2000 and I'd like to think that I'm socially conscious and I'd like to be part of a world that's more socially conscious. I'd like to look toward a future, and not a future that looks bleak." . . .

Bernsen rolls on to his next concern: religion. . . . He no longer believes in going to church on Sundays, he said. "I wake up in the morning and I smile and I don't have to wait until Sunday and go into a concrete building or wait with other people. I don't have to bless every meal. I believe in far greater than that: I believe in life, that force in life that's in all of us. Each and every one of us is a god, a part of God, no less or greater than a snail or bamboo in the forest . . .

This Corbin Bernsen sounds like a moralist, an environmentalist, maybe even a sort of evolutionist.

"This ain't no motel—this is home," he went on. "People treat this Earth like a motel room, because they think they're going to some other place. As far as I know, when I die I'm not going anywhere else, so don't mess up my heaven."

[January 21, 1990]

Anchorage Daily News

For those who think the *Village Voice* mentality cannot be transported across state lines, we publish Mr. Don Alexander's reaction to another of our government's failed attempts at World War III and Nuclear Holocaust:

The Republicans finally got the gift they wished for in November 1988, namely, a war. What's that you say? This is just a skirmish? . . . Personally, I feel as if I've been raped and robbed by His Royal Majesty King George's actions in Panama. I feel raped because the legacy of Southeast Asia, which has already violated our country, is still alive in the persons of Herr Bush and his sycophants, like Prince Ted of Alaska.

All Americans have been robbed, also. In the face of the crumbling of the walls of communist oppressions, on the heels of which all totalitarian states would surely fall, we had the chance to tell our children there would never be another war. This opportunity has been stolen from us by a jingoistic group whose greatest fear is peace.

[January 3, 1990]

International Herald-Tribune

On the howl page of this venerable paper of the world, the Conscience of St. Moritz speaks out:

President George Bush would do well to get out of the White House and walk among the destitute and homeless in America's big cities. Stealth bombers and "star wars" are not what they need.

—Walter P. Coolidge
St. Moritz, Switzerland
[February 15, 1990]

The Enterprise

(Brockton, Mass.)

A future editor of the *PEN Newsletter* levitates another bull above the heads of amazed readers in far-out Brockton:

In the growing list of victims exploited by the late Charles Stuart, there's one more victim no one has yet talked about: the animals killed for the fur coats that brought him in a cool $100,000 a year.

Stuart obviously cared no more about the murdered minks that paid for a heated pool in his yard than he did about a murdered wife and son, who were to pay for his dreams to open a restaurant.

One can argue that he didn't personally bloody his fingers in the making of the furs that he sold. Perhaps one could argue that he did not pull the trigger on his wife—he just perhaps had someone else do the dirty work.

In either case, the outcome for Stuart was the same: all he really wanted was to be able to wrap himself up in what society considers glamorous.

—Karen Carbone
Rockport
[January 27, 1990]

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IS THE CURRICULUM BIASED?

A Statement by the National Association of Scholars

American higher education is facing widespread demands to eliminate the allegedly "Eurocentric" and "patriarchal" bias of the curriculum. While the details vary from campus to campus, these demands tend to focus on four objectives:

- *that the "canon" be revised to include more works by blacks, other ethnic minorities, and women;*
- *that "the issues of race, gender, and class" be introduced into a greater variety of courses;*
- *that more courses in women's studies and minority studies be developed;*
- *that courses in women's studies and/or minority studies be required of all undergraduates.*

Various justifications are commonly proffered for making these changes. It is alleged that:

- *works by minorities, women, and Third World authors have been excluded from the curriculum;*
- *minority and female students feel alienated and their educational progress is retarded by being asked to study works primarily by white males;*
- *in order to overcome their own prejudices, white males must become acquainted with the cultures and problems of minorities and with the perspectives and problems of women;*
- *the traditional curriculum represents the hegemony of Western culture, covertly supports a status quo inherently oppressive of women and minorities, and is unfairly imposed on students from different cultures;*
- *the traditional desiderata of truth, objectivity, and critical intelligence can be met only by adding the perspectives of women and minorities and by facing up to the new questions they raise;*
- *an increasingly diverse society and interdependent world require that our citizens gain greater understanding of different cultures.*

The **National Association of Scholars** *disputes* the first five of these arguments and believes that the last entails something other than the changes being proposed.

First, any work, whether formerly neglected or widely known, should be added, retained, or removed from the curriculum on the basis of its conformance to generally applicable intellectual and aesthetic standards. A sound curriculum cannot be built by replacing those standards with the principle of proportional representation of authors, classified ethnically, biologically, or geographically.

Second, the idea that students will be discouraged by not encountering more works by members of their own race, sex, or ethnic group, even were it substantiated, would not justify adding inferior works. Such paternalism conveys a message opposite to the one desired.

Third, other cultures, minority subcultures, and social problems have long been studied in the liberal arts curriculum in such established disciplines as history, literature, comparative religion, economics, political science, anthropology, and sociology. But more important, mere acquaintance with differences does not guarantee tolerance, an ideal Western in origin and fostered by knowledge of what is common to us all.

Fourth, the idea that the traditional curriculum "excludes" the contributions of all but males of European descent is patently false. From their beginnings, Western art and science have drawn upon the achievements of non-Western societies and since have been absorbed and further enriched by peoples around the globe. That the liberal arts oppress minorities and women is yet more ludicrous. Even if the curriculum were confined to thought strictly European in origin, it would still present a rich variety of conflicting ideas, including the very concepts of equality and freedom from oppression invoked by those who would reorient the curriculum.

Fifth, while diversity of background is valuable to the discussion of issues to which those differences are germane, objectivity is in general not enhanced but subverted by the idea that people of different sexes, races, or ethnic backgrounds necessarily see things differently. The assertion that cognition is determined by group membership is itself an example of stereotypic thinking which undermines the possibility of a true community of discourse.

Sixth, the study of the traditions and achievements of other nations and of ethnic subcultures is important and should be encouraged. But this must proceed in a manner that is intellectually honest and does not serve as a pretext for inserting polemics into the curriculum. Furthermore, "multicultural education" should not take place at the expense of studies that transcend cultural differences: the truths of mathematics, the sciences, history, and so on, are not different for people of different races, sexes, or cultures, and for that reason alone their study is liberating. Nor should we further attenuate the study of the traditions of the West. Not only is knowledge of those traditions essential for any evaluation of our own institutions, it is increasingly relevant to our understanding of other nations, which, in striking testament to the universality of the values they embody, are rapidly adapting Western practices to their own situations.

The **National Association of Scholars** is in favor of ethnic studies, the study of non-Western cultures, and the study of the special problems of women and minorities in our society, but it opposes subordinating entire humanities and social science curricula to such studies and it views with alarm their growing politicization. Efforts purportedly made to introduce "other points of view" and "pluralism" often seem in fact designed to restrict attention to a narrow set of issues, tendentiously defined. An examination of many women's studies and minority studies courses and programs discloses little study of other cultures and much excoriation of our society for its alleged oppression of women, blacks, and others. The banner of "cultural diversity" is apparently being raised by some whose paramount interest actually lies in attacking the West and its institutions.

We urge our colleagues to demand clear explanations and cogent arguments in support of the proposals being so rapidly brought before them, and to reject any that cannot be justified. The curriculum is and should be open to change, but we must rebut the false charges being made against existing disciplines. We must also reject the allegations of "racism" and "sexism" that are frequently leveled against honest critics of the new proposals, and which only have the effect of stifling much-needed debate.

Copies of this statement or additional information about the **National Association of Scholars** and its activities, including its Fellows Program, Research Center, Speakers Bureau, state and regional affiliates, conferences, local membership events, executive and faculty search services, and its quarterly *Academic Questions*, may be obtained by writing to the **National Association of Scholars, Suite 250 East, Twenty Nassau Street, Princeton, NJ 08542**, or by calling **609-683-7878**.

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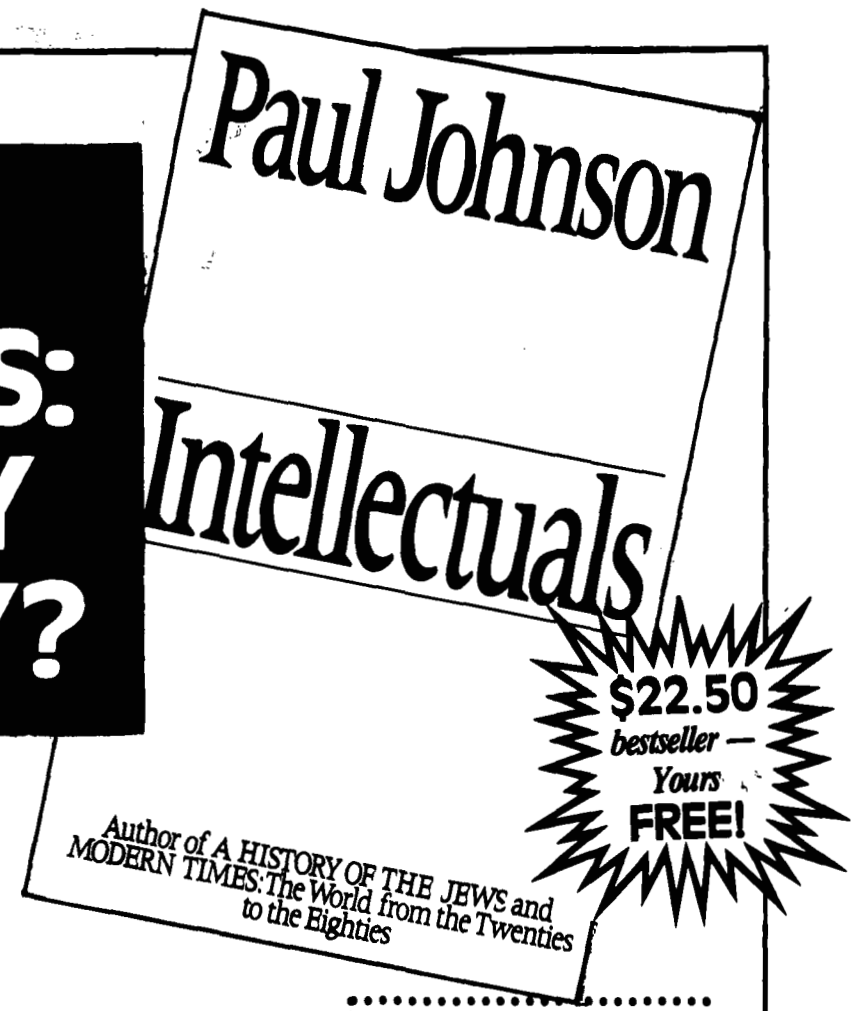

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